

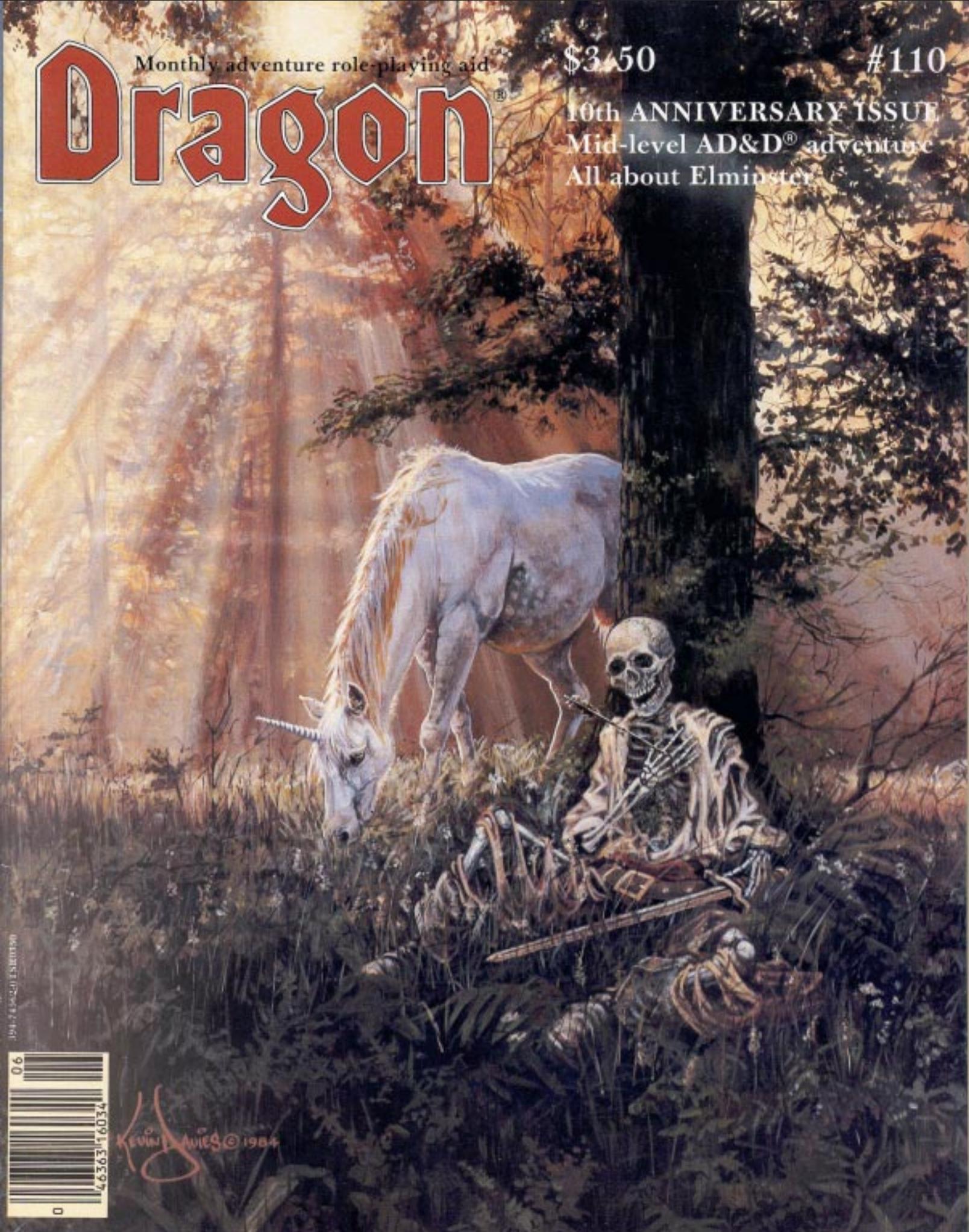
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Monthly adventure role-playing aid

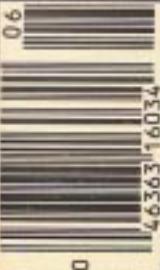
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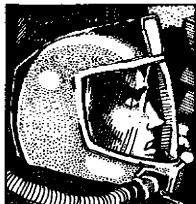
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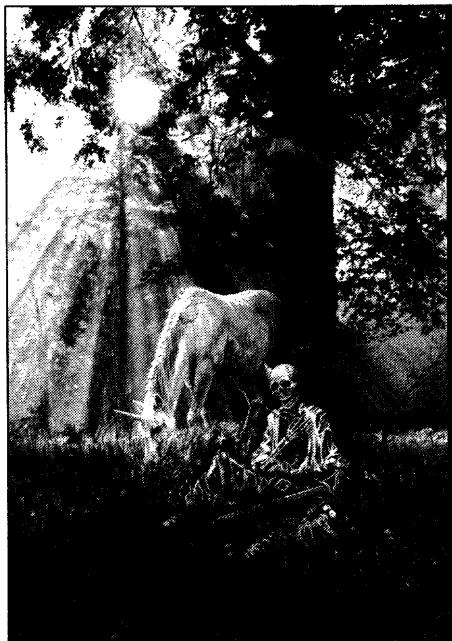
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Monthly adventure role-playing aid

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## COVER

For the second issue in a row, we welcome a new artist to the cover of DRAGON Magazine. The name of the painter is Kevin Davies, and the title of the painting is "The Vanquished Cavalier," a scene that somehow manages to be exhilarating and unsettling at the same time. The painting won the Amateur Best of Show award at the 1984 World Fantasy Convention — and now, the next time Kevin enters a contest, he's going to have to do so as a professional.

# Letters

## Ranger skills

Dear Dragon,

In "The Ranger Redefined" (#106), the terrain, climate, and skills section gives percentages to determine if a ranger is specially proficient in a given skill. Over in the miscellaneous skills section, it says rangers have a base 75% chance of success in physical skills. I'd like to know how special proficiency affects this base chance; the article didn't say.

Owen Kelm  
Ft. Thomas, Ky.

*A few people seem to be having trouble seeing how the two "% chance" figures work together. Here's the way I interpret it, and the way I think the author intended for the system to work:*

*According to Table 3 in Section I, a ranger who is native to a certain kind of terrain has a chance of possessing exceptional ability in one or more physical skills. So far, so good. Now, over in Section III, it says there's a 75% chance of a ranger succeeding when he tries to do something that involves the use of an exceptional physical ability "Special proficiency" as Owen put it, doesn't do anything to the base chance — because the base chance doesn't apply unless the ranger has "special proficiency" in the first place.*

*For example: A ranger with exceptional ability in swimming has a base chance of 75% to perform some feat that is beyond the capability of someone without exceptional ability. The exact nature of such an exceptional feat is up to the DM to determine; for swimming, it might involve endurance (negotiating the English Channel) or speed (a world-class time in the 100-yard freestyle). Someone without exceptional swimming ability would have no chance at all of accomplishing such a feat, and someone with that exceptional ability can accomplish such a feat three-quarters of the time. — KM*

## Group effort

Dear Dragon,

In the article "The pernicon: a new version" (#108), wouldn't the colonel and his henchman get a number of attacks equal to their levels because the pernicon is a monster of less than one hit die? If not, why?

Bruce Roberts, Jr.  
Yakima, Wash.

*Multiple attacks are already accounted for in the revised "mass combat" system given for pernicon swarms, on page 25. Any attack against a swarm kills as many pernicons as there were points of damage done. This is because the swarm is treated as a single creature, not a collection of smaller monsters. If you want to consider each pernicon separately, then the colonel and his henchman would indeed be entitled to multiple attacks — but that approach defeats the purpose of the system described in the article, and it also requires a whole lot more dice-rolling than treat-*

*ing the swarm as a monster unto itself. In either case, the end result is basically the same; either one hit kills "x" pernicons of the swarm (reducing the swarm's hit points accordingly), or "x" hits considered one by one kill an equal number of pernicons.*

*While we're on the subject, another pernicon-related question has come up. Some people noticed the references to field plate and full plate armor, and are wondering exactly what we're talking about. Space doesn't permit a detailed description of each type, but we can say this: Both were introduced to the AD&D® game system in *Unearthed Arcana*. Field plate bestows armor class 2 on the wearer and someone decked out in full plate has a base armor class of 1.*

*Field plate can absorb one point of damage per die, up to a maximum of 12 points. Full plate can absorb two points of damage per die, up to a maximum of 26. When the maximum is reached, the armor loses its absorption ability and also becomes one step worse in armor class until it is repaired. For more details, pick up a copy of *Arcana* or borrow it from a friend. — KM*

## Computer query

Dear Dragon:

While recently looking through some of my back issues, I wondered what ever became of "The Electric Eye." I think that this feature would still be an interesting part of the magazine, and I hope that you revive it some day.

Kevin Lyman  
New Orleans, La.

*Funny you should ask, Kevin. "The role of computers," which begins on page 38 in this issue, represents our re-entry into coverage of computers and computer games. It's been almost four years since the last appearance of "The Electric Eye," our first venture in this area, and as we all know, the scope and quality of computer games have both increased dramatically in the meantime.*

*Responses from the reader survey we published in #107 are still being tabulated, but we've been able to draw some definite conclusions already. One of those conclusions is that most of you do want the magazine to cover computer gaming, and particularly role-playing game software. Fortunately, we were recently approached by Hartley and Pattie Lesser with a proposal to provide us with just such a column, and the result of their first effort is inside.*

*Hartley and Pattie are a husband-and-wife team from California who have been doing this kind of writing for a few years. They make it their business to keep up on what's happening in the game software industry, and their columns for DRAGON Magazine will concentrate on the kinds of games that we think most of our readers would prefer — in other words, adventure and role-playing games. If you have a particular question or comment about a computer game, send it to the magazine and we'll see that it is forwarded to the experts. — KM*

## The first decade is behind us

My attitude about anniversaries isn't what it used to be. I used to like to dwell on where we've been and how far we've come whenever we reached some milestone. Nowadays I'm more inclined to look forward instead of backward. That's why this Tenth Anniversary Column isn't going to be filled with reminiscences like the Issue #100 Column was.

Oh, sure, the occasion does deserve to be recognized. And I'm not trying to make light of the fact that DRAGON® Magazine has been in existence longer than some of its readers have been alive. But at a time like this, contemplation seems more appropriate than congratulation. We know where we've been, and we know where we're at. The big question is, Where do we go from here?

That big question encompasses several smaller ones, such as: How many subjects are left to be covered? How many subjects that we've already covered deserve to be re-examined? What new topics can we pursue to keep the magazine at least as interesting and attractive to you as it is now? Or should we forget about new topics altogether and just keep on doing what we're doing?

For starters, I can answer that last question. One of the features in this issue is a step in a new direction for us. And I don't want to tantalize you (well, not *too* much), but there are more changes coming. When we finish wading through all the responses we've received to our reader survey, we're going to put all of that feedback to good use.

We could probably keep going for another ten years, at least, by not doing anything differently. If our circulation figures are any indication, for the last two or three years the number of people who have become actively involved in role-playing games is roughly equal to the number of people who have lost interest in the hobby. We could assume that this trend will persist, and we'll keep on gaining one reader for every reader we lose. But nobody ever got anywhere by treading water; the best that can be said about that tactic is that it keeps you from drowning. That's certainly better than the alternative, but it's not the best we could do. We want to make progress, we want to move, and we want you to keep coming along for the ride.

This is where I have to be careful not to let this message degenerate into something hokey and maudlin. I'm not trying to pull the wool over your eyes. I'm not trying to fit you with a pair of rose-colored glasses. I'm not hoping that you'll keep buying

*(Turn to page 45)*

# The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address, plus your gaming preferences, to World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested:

AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU®

game; GW = GAMMA WORLD® game; SF = STAR FRONTIERS® game; ST = STAR TREK® The Role-Playing Game; MSH = MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game; TS = TOP SECRET® game; T = TRAVELLER® game; RQ = RUNEQUEST® game; VV = VILLAINS & VIGILANTEST™.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who live outside the continental United States and Canada, in areas where nearby gamers are small in number or nonexistent, as a

way for them to contact other game-players who would be interested in corresponding about the activities that they enjoy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend this service to persons who live in remote areas of the U.S. or Canada, or to U.S. military personnel with APO or FPO addresses. Each eligible name and address that we receive will be published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON® Magazine; to be listed for more than three issues, you must send in another postcard or letter.

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DRAGON® Magazine (ISSN 0279-6848) is published monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address for all material except subscription orders is DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147; the business telephone number is (414)248-3625. DRAGON Magazine is available at hobby stores and bookstores throughout the United States and Canada, and through a limited number of overseas outlets. Subscription rates via second-class mail are as follows: \$24 in U.S. funds for 1 year (12 issues) sent to an address in the U.S. or Canada, \$55 for 12 issues sent by surface mail to any other address, and \$95 for 12 issues sent airmail to any other address. Payment in full must accompany all subscription orders. Methods of payment include checks or money orders made payable to TSR, Inc., or charges to valid MasterCard or VISA credit cards. Send subscription orders with payments to: TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 72089, Chicago IL 60690. A limited quantity of back issues are available from the TSR mail order department, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. For a copy of the current catalog listing available back issues, write to the mail order department at the above address. The issue of expiration of each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change in order to assure uninterrupted delivery. All material published in DRAGON Magazine becomes the exclusive property of the publisher, unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication. DRAGON Magazine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork; however, no responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. Any submission accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size will be returned if it cannot be published.

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# The forum

Since The Forum began, I have wanted to reply to many letters, often several in each issue, but never so much as Daniel Myers' letter in issue #107.

In his letter, Mr. Myers informed us that he would no longer be purchasing DRAGON Magazine or any other TSR products because they were of little use to him and his campaign. His rebuke was impressive enough that I even cross-examined myself in regard to a subscription renewal of DRAGON Magazine just waiting to be mailed. Rest at ease, for I did renew my subscription. Mr. Myers touched on several issues that I completely agree with, but their basis has not driven me from faith in the AD&D wizards at TSR.

I must agree that the recent slant toward the WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy Setting prevalent in *Unearthed Arcana* has upset me. The package Mr. Gygax has presented of his own fantasy setting must be quite popular, for its continuation has sprung up continually in various publications of DRAGON Magazine, special Greyhawk modules, and now a novel. But I think it poor oversight to specifically incorporate Greyhawk material in any "official" manual, specifically *Unearthed Arcana*. To do so eliminates a feeling of creative encouragement to Dungeon Masters who use their own fantasy milieu.

I have never used nor carefully examined any Greyhawk package or module. I have carefully avoided them since I began my campaign, because that is what I believe it is — my campaign. This is not to say I have not used the rules established by Mr. Gygax or the creatures presented in the *Monster Manuals*. I am, after all, playing the AD&D game, and the spirit presented in those rules leaves plenty of freedom for my imagination.

Still, I have incorporated, thus far, several additions presented in the new *Unearthed Arcana* manual: elven rangers, cavalier attributes, certain weapon specialization skills, and the new spells that I have hoped for for some time. I find it hard to use such new races as the valley elf, for the description itself ("... derived from the Valley of the Mage, where the sub-race is headquartered in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy Game Setting . . .") must be altered to fit my needs, and it always seems to impose to me that it is not a creation intended for my use. This is not to say that I will not use the valley elf or other of Mr. Gygax's creations that had their origins in Greyhawk. Most likely I will. But they will be more uniform and slightly different, conforming to my world and not to his.

I should point out that I have not bought a module in three years that was not completely altered by the time it was played in my campaign. I find it hard to incorporate them into my personal world, and I end up using only the ideas which I find interesting and workable, usually but a small portion of the original module because my campaign and its adventurers have become so very specialized.

In regard to Mr. Myers's complaint of bias toward TSR and its products, of course, to some degree, that is unavoidable. I find that the staff of

DRAGON Magazine commits more than a fair amount of output to other products and companies compared to what I would expect. For that matter, I generally do not like the areas committed to companies and products other than TSR and AD&D gaming in particular.

Though it is seldom that I use DRAGON Magazine as a major addition to my campaign, quite often there is one article or one letter or one idea that makes my entire subscription worthwhile. I am unsure that Mr. Myers will be reading this reply, since he informed us that he would no longer buy DRAGON Magazine, but I hope he does. He might see that one article or idea of interest in this very issue, and he might just reconsider.

R. Zane Rutledge  
Big Spring, Tex.

Three cheers for Fraser Sherman's insightful article "Casting spells for cash" in issue #106! The article offers useful suggestions on how magic-users of all levels can use their specialized skills for making money without risking their lives on an adventure. In my experience, these activities can make a very real difference in the lives of all the inhabitants of a fantasy world.

In addition to the host of suggestions offered in Sherman's article, I would like to add the following ideas that have been suggested over the years within my own group of FRP gamers. For instance, the *continual light* spell available to both magic-users and clerics is extremely useful, due to its relative permanence. Unless *dispelled*, a *continual light* cast on a small, durable object (such as a nail, spike, or rock) can act as the magical equivalent of a light bulb that will never burn out. The relatively low level of the spell would make the items fairly common in some circles (churches, magic-user guilds, etc.), especially since they could last for centuries.

Another spell that could be used to great advantage is *transmute rock to mud*. A dwarven lord of my acquaintance desired a dungeon underneath his mountain fortress. The castle was built on solid stone, so I informed him that it would be a long, arduous task to carve out the stone. He responded by hiring a 9th-level magic-user to use *transmute rock to mud* in the desired areas. His laborers then only had to remove the "mud" and his dungeon was dug. The bonus with this spell is that the "mud" can be formed into blocks and then returned to the rock form by casting *dispel magic*. Even if the DM rules that the "mud" will not form a solid stone, since its structure has been rearranged, precautions can be taken to remove the "mud" in bricks or slabs.

At this point, I would like to add a word of caution for the uses of *polymorph other* suggested in the article. A high-level magic-user can wreak havoc with the balance of power through the use of this spell. If a cow can be turned into a griffon (as Sherman suggested), why can't a monkey be turned into a dragon? A wizard with virtually unlimited access to dragons is a scenario I could do without. Solving this problem without stifling

the players' imaginations is a tough job, and one that each DM should be prepared to solve.

My final comments deal with the effects of spell availability on everyday life. To be sure, not everyone will have access to the beneficial spells that Sherman describes. However, as he so clearly explains in the article, magic is the technology of the AD&D world. It is inevitable that this technology would have some impact on virtually every inhabitant of that world. What would happen to the crime rate in a big city if it is known that the High Magistrate can read minds? What happens to the life expectancy if diseases can be effectively cured and the cause of those diseases can be learned (through *contact other plane* or *commune*)? What happens to the overall availability of information when *crystal balls*, *teleports*, and interplanar travel are available to the world leaders and their friends? These questions, and others like them, can only be answered for a specific campaign, because of the different levels of magic and other powers in each world. However, even for the most magic-poor campaign, the existence of magic will certainly be felt.

Philip Winters  
Uniontown, Ohio

About "Agents and A-bombs" (issue #108), let me nitpick a bit.

Firstly, an alpha particle is not made up of a proton and a neutron (that's the recipe for a deuteron), but of two protons and two neutrons (it's an helium-4 nucleus).

Secondly, I think Thomas gravely exaggerated uranium-238's activity; it is actually pretty close to harmless. The corrected material follows, with two of my own new additions:

Uranium-238: Alpha 1, Beta 0, Gamma 0.

Uranium-233: Alpha 5, Beta 0, Gamma 2, Half-life 159,000 years, Biological 300 days.

Thorium-232: Alpha 1, Beta 0, Gamma 0, Half-life 14 billion years, Biological (?).

Thirdly, I'll add two reactor types to Thomas' list: CANDU and the thorium breeder. CANDU (CANadian-Deuterium-Uranium) uses natural uranium as fuel, and runs on heavy water (no, heavy water is not poisonous). It cannot blow up (U-238 does not have a critical mass), but it could conceivably melt down.

The thorium breeder (also called the slow breeder) has not been built yet, but could be in the near future; it is a breeder, turning Th-232 (the only naturally occurring isotope of thorium) into U-233, which is just as good as U-235 for fission. Its advantage is that it runs as a conventional reactor while breeding, and does not pose the dangers of the high-temperature plutonium breeders (also called fast breeders).

The lines to add to the plant-type table would be:

CANDU: Meltdown chance 40%, Area contaminated 1-100 sq. mi., Explosion chance nil.

Thorium breeder: Meltdown chance 60%, Area contaminated 1-100 sq. mi., Explosion chance 40%.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that Californium-252 is manufactured in microgram quantities only. This is partly because you have to make it nucleus by nucleus, and partly because its critical mass is so small: *just a few grams*. One could, in theory, build a lo-kiloton A-bomb with a supply of Cf-252 that would be the size of a bullet (the ultimate handgun!).

I hope these little tidbits of information will prove helpful to Administrators who are contemplating the irradiation of their agents. . . .

Daniel U. Thibault  
St. Nicolas, Quebec

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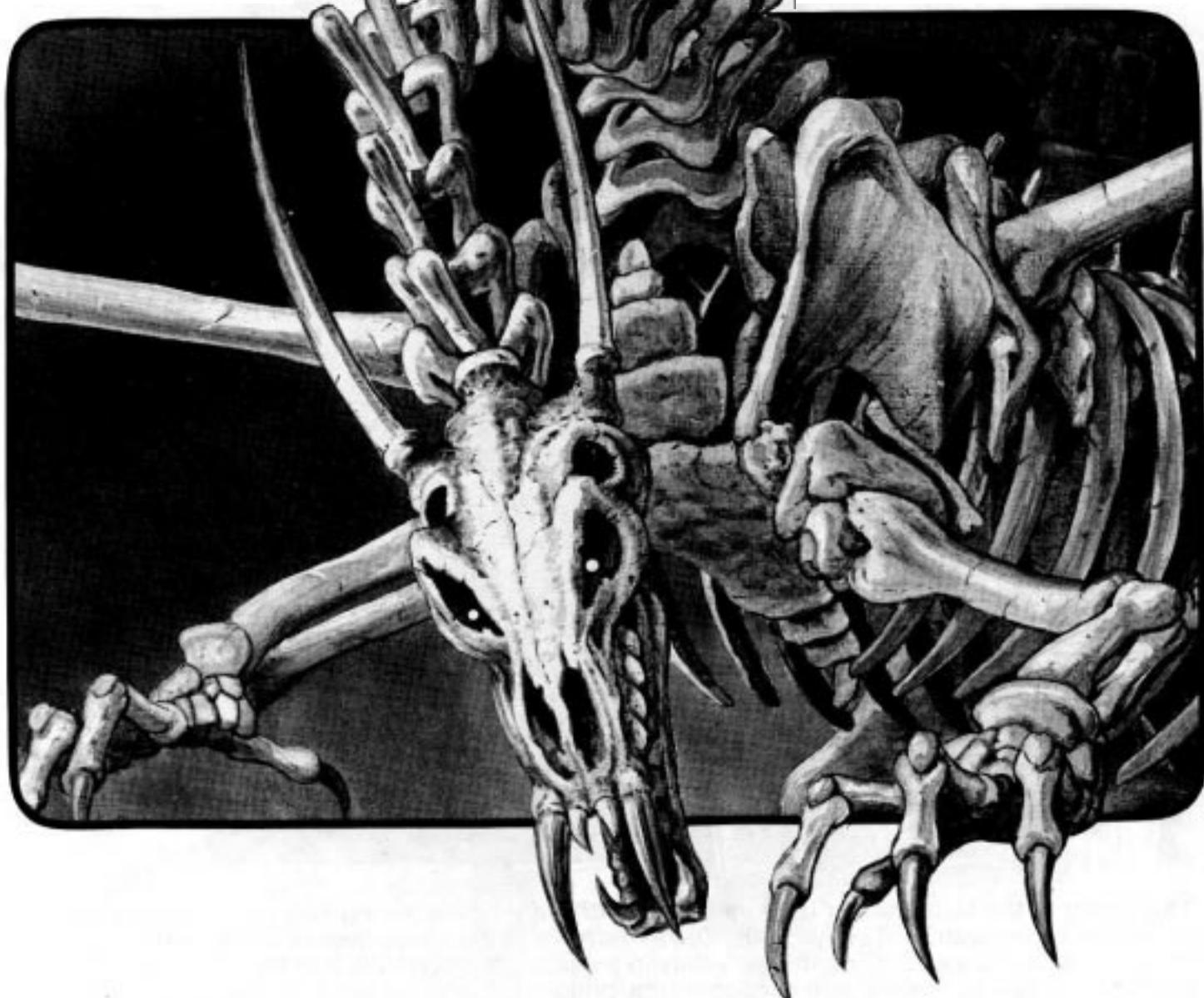
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# The **CULT OF THE DRAGON**

by Ed Greenwood



Describing the dreaded dracolich  
and the sorcerers who create them

The series of DRAGONLANCE™ modules and novels from TSR, Inc., have given us a detailed campaign setting dominated by warring dragons: the world of Krynn. This world is an admirable setting in which to begin an AD&D® game campaign, or "a nice place to visit" (via interplanar spells) for player characters in an established campaign.

Krynn is otherwise rather difficult to integrate into an ongoing AD&D campaign. It is too polarized a world for casual adventuring, and comes complete with its own gods, powerful magic, and large-scale strife-in-progress. For those DMs who like their dragons less dominant, but still fancy some sort of dragonkind organization or power group (rather than using dragons as a succession of isolated, unsuspecting targets), I present some details of the mysterious Cult of the Dragon, from my Forgotten Realms campaign.

Less powerful — thus, necessarily more secretive — than the forces at work in Krynn, this group of human dragon-worshipers (and a splinter group or independent sect, the devil-worshiping Dragon Lords who serve Tiamat directly) has been one of the behind-the-scenes continual adversaries for a group of quite energetic players over the last five years or so. There is no reason its activities could not serve as a similar incentive to challenging adventures in other campaigns.

Respectful non-believers refer to the Cult as "The Followers of the Scaly Way." "Dragon-lovers" is a less complimentary term. The Cult serves as a communications network between members of evil dragonkind throughout the Realms, as well as directly aiding (by physical defense and healing magics) and monetarily enriching (by means of offerings of precious objects of all kinds) the creatures of their veneration. The sign of the Cult, used as a way-marker or recognition signal among members, is a claw grasping a crown — the crown representing rulership of the Realms, the claw representing the dragons revered by the Cult. There is also a gesture used by Cult members to identify themselves to colleagues and allies — extending a hand, palm down, from one's chin directly outward and forward, fingers held straight out and together, and blowing along these extended fingers from one's lips. Cult members include many powerful evil mages, fighting-men of all levels of skill, and a few evil clerics. Most of the more powerful Cult members can converse in one or more evil dragon tongues (most commonly red or blue).

The origins of this cult can be traced precisely to the writings of the long-ago mage Sammaster (the same who, much later, was destroyed as a lich by "The Company of Twelve" paladins in the ruined city known as "The Gates of Hell"). Sammaster translated a particular passage of *The Chronicle Of Years To Come*, written by the legendary oracle Maglas, and took from it a meaning different from most. Here is the

passage as rendered by Elminster and most other sages:

"And naught will be left save shattered thrones, with no rulers but the dead. Dragons shall rule the world entire, and . . ."

Sammaster, however, interpreted the passage thus:

"And naught will be left save shattered thrones, with no rulers. But the Dead Dragons shall rule the world entire, and . . ."

Followers of Sammaster (who himself achieved lichdom) interpreted this to mean that the ultimate rulers of the world would be "dead dragons" — and, as Sammaster's own researches had just resulted in the rediscovery of the process of creating a lich, someone (thought to be the renegade cleric Algashon) seized upon the idea of creating undead dragons by a similar process. The Cult was founded with the aim of creating and serving these "dead dragons," elevating them to dominance over all dragonkind, by dint of their lich-powers and the allied strength of the Cult organization, and ultimately ruling over the world itself. The Cult — or, rather, the dracoliches of its creation — can claim to have conquered the kingdom of Peleveran in the far southeastern Realms, but only by means of laying waste to the kingdom. What was once a tree-cloaked, fertile land is now barren, stony, open country.

The goal of mastering the means to create dracoliches (or, as non-believers who knew nothing of their origins first dubbed them, "Night Dragons") was achieved with surprising rapidity, considering that until the process was proven to work, there were certainly no willing, cooperative subject dragons to be found. The earliest dracoliches created by the Cult have now existed in their undead status for some four hundred and sixty winters — and all of these dragons were of ancient age when the process began. Most sages believe that, like the once-human monsters known as demi-liches (see *Monster Manual II*), the body of a dracolich will decay with time, becoming skeletal and later collapsing entirely into dust. The magic then preserves the dragon's spirit more or less as a disembodied entity.

What will then occur is not known. Will these demi-dracoliches have even more fearsome powers? Or, will they pass away into nothingness? Some sages, notably Raglar "the Worldwatcher," hold that any dragon unable to **physically** hoard, handle, defend, and acquire more treasure will ultimately go insane — as continual, sensual contact with the hoard is so great a part of a dragon's nature. Others, notably Askarran of Selgaunt, say that it is unwise to speculate in so murky a field — **nothing** is yet known, so nothing can be intelligently hazarded. Some sages, such as Ahlimon of Iriaebor, assert that ultimately all "disembodied" dracolich spirits are drawn to the Lower Planes, as are all evil spirits upon death, and there become larvae.

The process of creating a dracolich is now

well known among sages, however, for the cultists have implemented it vigorously — particularly upon huge, very old or ancient evil dragons with spell-casting powers. The difficulty, for the cultists, has traditionally been in getting dragons to agree to undertake the process. In the early days of the cult, this was usually solved by forcing a dragon into it, an activity that took its toll in both warriors and mages. This tactic is now frowned upon.

The traditional initial step in preparation for lichdom is the imbibing of a potion. The potion for dragons differs from that used by humans in both ingredients and effects — but, as with the latter, it must all be imbibed in one dose for it to work at all, and it does not always cause the desired effect. The ingredients are as follows:

Two pinches of pure arsenic  
One pinch of belladonna  
One measure of fresh (less than 30 nights old) phase-spider venom (at least one pint)

The blood (at least one quart) of a virgin of a demi-human individual, of a long-lived race (or, alternatively, a gallon of treant sap; this ingredient must have been drawn seven or less nights previously)

The blood (at least one quart) of a vampire or a person infected with vampirism (this ingredient must have been drawn seven or less nights previously)

One complete **potion of evil dragon control**

One complete **potion of invulnerability**

The seven ingredients must be mixed together in an inert vessel (such as one of stone) by the light of a full moon, adding the ingredients to the vessel in the order listed, stirring all the while with the blade of an undamaged, magically whole **sword +2, dragon slayer** (which may be of any alignment, and strikes for triple damage against any sort of dragon). It may be imbibed at any time thereafter; the mixture will only lose its efficacy if it is touched by direct sunlight while uncovered, or if it is mixed with other liquids.

When such a potion is drunk by any sort of true dragon, it will have the following effects:

**Dice Result**

01-46 Potion does not work. The dragon suffers 2-24 hp damage, is helpless with convulsions for 1-2 rounds, and loses any spells memorized.

47-66 Potion works. The dragon lapses into a coma for 1-4 rounds, and when it rouses knows that the potion has worked.

67-96 Dragon slain instantly, but potion works. If the "host" has been prepared, the dragon's spirit will go there and continue the process of becoming a dracolich.

97-00 Dragon slain instantly; potion

does not work. A full *wish* is needed to restore dragon to life. (A wish to transform it to undead, dracolich status will cause another roll on this table, instantly.)

If any creature other than a true dragon imbibes any portion of a dracolich potion, use the following table to determine the potion's effects:

#### Dice Result

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 01-44 | Painful death in 1-2 rounds. The victim shrieks and has convulsions.   |
| 45-67 | The imbiber is dealt 3-36 hp damage, as the potion corrodes his internal tissues.  |
| 68-72 | The imbiber is <i>feeble-minded</i> and affected by a withering disease (treat as the "rotting disease" inflicted by a mummy).   |
| 73-80 | The imbiber goes into a coma for 1-6 turns, and is driven <i>insane</i> (as per the <i>DMG</i> ).  |
| 81-84 | The imbiber goes into a coma for 1-6 turns, and upon awakening can speak all evil dragon tongues.  |
| 85-90 | The imbiber goes into a coma for 1-6 turns, and thereafter nothing appears to occur. (DM's note: The imbiber has been rendered forever immune to vampirism, the disease — but can still be life-drained and physically damaged by any vampire(s) encountered.) |
| 91-00 | The imbiber goes into a coma for 1-6 turns, and nothing more occurs.   |

No *charm*, *aura reading*, or similar spell or mental test will reveal that a dragon has successfully drunk such a potion.

The Cult of the Dragon always prepares the dragon's "spirit-host" before administering the potion, in case the potion slays the dragon instantly. This host must be a solid item of not less than 2000 gp value that will resist decay (wood, for instance, is unsuitable) and was magically prepared. Gems are commonly used, particularly specimens of carbuncle and jet — although peridot, sard, ruby, and sometimes even fragile black pearls or obsidian have been employed. It is desirous that the host item be often close to corpses (as explained below); for this reason, such a gem is often set in a sword-hilt.

The host first has *enchant an item* cast upon it (and must save vs. spell as though of the caster's level for this to be successful). If desired, *glassteel* can then be cast upon it, to protect the host, and then *trap the soul* must be cast upon it. Upon the speaking of the dragon's *truename* during the casting, the dragon will instantly lose 1 hp per hit die it currently possesses; these pass forever into the host. (The host should not have a *maze* spell cast on it; it is not a "soul-prison.") The dragon will fall instantly into a coma for 1-4 days, and during this time its mind cannot be contacted or attacked by

magic or psionics. Its mind is unreachable, as its spirit flits back and forth constantly between the host and its dragon body. (Any spells memorized by the dragon at the time *trap the soul* was cast are lost.)

If the dragon dies or is slain at any time after this, and it has before death imbibed the aforementioned potion, its spirit will go into the host, regardless of the distance between dragon body and host (which can even be on different planes of existence) or the presence of *prismatic spheres*, lead boxes, *cubes of force*, or similar obstacles. At this time, the host will *levitate* for 1-6 rounds, rising two or three inches upward.

Cult mages (or any other mage wishing to aid a dragon in attaining lichdom) must then provide a reptilian corpse, ideally that of a dragon or related creature. The body of an ice lizard, firedrake, wyvern, or fire lizard is ideal; that of a dragonne, dragon turtle, or dracolisk has only a small chance of successful use by the dragon's spirit. The corpse of a pseudo-dragon, pterandon, or other non-draconian creature is extremely unlikely to work. The body must be freshly killed (or, at least, dead within the period of the current moon, or 30 days), and within 90' of the host. The mage must then touch the host, cast a *magic jar* spell that includes the *true name* of the dragon, and then touch the corpse. In effect, the mage carries the dragon's spirit from host to corpse within his or her own body.

The corpse must *fail* a save vs. spell for the dragon's spirit to successfully possess it; if it saves, it will *never* accept the spirit. For this saving throw, the corpse is treated as a fighter of the same level as the dragon had hit dice when alive, with the following modifiers (any that apply) to the roll:

- 4 if the corpse is of the same alignment as the dragon
- 4 if the corpse is that of a true dragon (any type)
- 3 if the corpse is that of a firedrake, ice lizard, wyvern, or fire lizard
- 1 if the corpse is that of a dracolisk, dragonne, pterandon, or dragon turtle
- +3 if the corpse is that of a non-reptile (i.e., not a lizard man, snake, ophidian, or the like)
- 10 if the corpse is the dragon's own former body (which can be dead *any* length of time)

If the dragon's spirit cannot enter the body, it will take over the magic-user's own body, unless the magic-user returns it to the host by touching the host again within 2-12 rounds. It can remain in the host for any length of time without harm — unless the host is itself destroyed.

If the corpse accepts the dragon's spirit, it becomes animated by the spirit, and has the dragon's own mind and its dracolich immunities (see below). It will be telepathic if the dragon could speak in life, but unless it is

the dragon's own former body, cannot speak — and therefore cannot cast spells with verbal components. (If your campaign rules dictate that dragons must use their forepaws to manipulate material and somatic components, then the dracolich may meet further difficulties if the corpse has no usable forepaws.) It can learn spells if they are available to be memorized, until its roster is full, whereupon it can never learn spells again. If the Cult of the Dragon is involved, the Cult will see that powerful and useful magics are learned.

The "proto-dracolich" has but one goal: If it is not itself the body of the dragon, it hungers for the original body, and will seek out and devour that corpse. (For this reason, Cult members favor using the dragon's own body — *i.e.*, keeping the host near it — or else providing corpses with wings, to make any journey to the original body as rapid and easy as possible.) The dragon's spirit can sense the direction and distance of its own former body, regardless of distance (although it cannot pass without aid to another plane of existence to reach it), and will tirelessly seek it out, not needing other meals for sustenance, nor rest.

If the dragon's own body has been burned or dismembered, the proto-dracolich need only devour the ashes or pieces. Total destruction of the dragon's body is possible only through use of a *disintegrate* spell (the body gets a normal save vs. the spell). If a Cult mage or other magic-user casts a *limited* (or full) *wish*, the body can be reincorporated if it was disintegrated on the Positive, Negative, or Prime Material Plane, as long as the *wish* is cast in the same plane as that *disintegration occurred*. Typically, various teeth and organs of a dragon are carried off by magic-users, alchemists, or adventurers wishing to sell such remains to mages or alchemists, and the proto-dracolich need only wait until such individuals are asleep or engaged in other activity (such as combat or spell-casting) to seize and devour the parts.

Only 10% or so of the body must be so devoured for the proto-dracolich to achieve its aim (it will know when this has occurred). Thereafter, within seven days, the proto-dracolich will metamorphose into a body resembling the dragon's original body in life — able to speak, cast spells, and employ the breath weapon just as the dragon could when it was alive. (If the dracolich possesses its own former body, it regains speech and the use of its breath weapon within seven days of possession.) It is then a dracolich, with the powers and properties described below, and becomes an object of worship, aid, and protection for all members of the Cult of the Dragon throughout the Realms.

The dracolich will immediately be gifted with gold and gems by the most senior members of the Cult, "The Keepers of the Secret Hoard," and these mages will provide it with spells if it so desires. The Keepers have carefully gathered, recorded, and improved a selection of powerful spells for

the use of its winged leaders. The Cult is known to have and provide the following magics:

|                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1st Level                  | 2nd Level                  |
| <i>Affect normal fires</i> | <i>Audible glamor</i>      |
| <i>Dancing lights</i>      | <i>Continual light</i>     |
| <i>Identify</i>            | <i>Darkness 15' r.</i>     |
| <i>Light</i>               | <i>ESP</i>                 |
| <i>Magic missile</i>       | <i>Flaming sphere</i>      |
| <i>Mending</i>             | <i>In visibility</i>       |
| <i>Message</i>             | <i>Knock</i>               |
| <i>Push</i>                | <i>Levitate</i>            |
| <i>Shield</i>              | <i>Locate object</i>       |
| <i>Sleep</i>               | <i>Magic mouth</i>         |
| <i>Unseen servant</i>      | <i>Pyrotechnics</i>        |
| <i>Ventriloquism</i>       | <i>Ray of enfeeblement</i> |
| <i>Write</i>               | <i>Stinking cloud</i>      |
|                            | <i>Web</i>                 |
|                            | <i>Wizard Lock</i>         |
| 3rd Level                  | 4th Level                  |
| <i>Blink</i>               | <i>Charm monster</i>       |
| <i>Clairaudience</i>       | <i>Confusion</i>           |
| <i>Clairvoyance</i>        | <i>Dig</i>                 |
| <i>Dispel magic</i>        | <i>Dimension door</i>      |
| <i>Fireball</i>            | <i>Fire trap</i>           |
| <i>Gust of wind</i>        | <i>Ice storm</i>           |
| <i>Hold person</i>         | <i>Minor globe of inv.</i> |
| <i>Lightning bolt</i>      | <i>Polymorph other</i>     |
| <i>Slow</i>                | <i>Polymorph self</i>      |
| <i>Suggestion</i>          | <i>Remove curse</i>        |
| <i>Tongues</i>             | <i>Wall of fire</i>        |
| <i>Water breathing</i>     | <i>Wall of ice</i>         |
| <i>Wind wall</i>           | <i>Wizard eye</i>          |

The report of one adventurer, thus far unverified, suggests that *Nystul's magic aura* (or an equivalent spell that places false magical auras upon items in a dragon's hoard) is also in the Cult's list of dragon spells, and perhaps also *Melf's minute meteors*, or a similar "multiple balls of fire" spell which is within the reach of dragons and dracoliches aided by the Cult.

Dracoliches employ their spells as though they were magic-users of the same level as their number of hit dice (at the time of the original full-roster memorization, "host" hit points included).

The Cult cannot directly control any dracolich. Members of the Cult revere dragons, and work instead by trying to build friendship, trust, and mutual respect. Dragons and dracoliches are loners, but they do enjoy the knowledge that they have allies, and place value in such relationships. The Cult can, however, request (by messenger or signal) the aid of any and all dracoliches. It does so only when necessary, and is careful to reward with treasure any dragons or dracoliches giving such aid. The signal mentioned here is given by means of a magic item developed by the Cult: the ring of dragons. Worn only by powerful Cult members (there are perhaps seventy such rings in existence), these rings are activated only by the will of the wearer, who can cause such a ring to become a beacon for all dragonkind.

The ring of dragons (which appears as a

normal brass ring) causes a twinkling radiance and a mental calling, confined to the plane of the wearer, but of unlimited range on that plane, audible and visible only to dragonkind. Only evil dragons will feel the calling; any interested dragon may respond. The signal has a pinpoint location (*i.e.*, an observable, precise direction and distance from any dragon becoming aware of it), and will continue until the wearer wills it to end, moving with the ring, but ceasing if the ring is removed from the wearer who activated it. No control or influence over any dragon is conferred by the ring.

The ring also empowers any wearer to communicate verbally in any dragon tongue, and telepathically with any true dragon, and the wearer can also cast (once per day) the *illusion* of a dragon, within 6" of the wearer, such an illusion having any appearance and sounds that the ring-wearer can recall, but having no physical existence, no ability to cast spells, and no ability to do any form of damage, even if believed. No true dragon will be fooled by such an illusion. The illusion serves as a recognition symbol or, in a pinch, as a diversion. A ring of dragons is usable by any intelligent creature, regardless of race, alignment, or class, who can physically place it upon a manipulative digit. Most sages value such rings at about 15,000 gp. The method of their making is presently unknown outside the Cult, and they are not offered for sale.

Each time a dracolich is slain, its spirit

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can return to the host; if it possibly can, the dracolich will try to bring its body with it (i.e., escaping before being brought to zero hit points) by spell or magical aid. Each time a dracolich returns to its host, it loses permanently one hit die (1d8) of hit points; if by such means a dracolich is ever brought to zero hit points, it passes away (presumably to the Lower Planes) as a helpless, disembodied spirit. If it ever returns to the host and there is no corpse within range for it to possess, or if it fails to possess all corpses within range, it is trapped in the host until such later time (if ever) that there is a corpse within range that it successfully possesses. (After the initial *magic jar* described above, the later assistance of a magic-user is not necessary.) The dracolich must devour its former body each time it possesses a new one, if it is to regain its dracolich powers.

If a proto-dracolich cannot devour its original body, due to barriers or the destruction of its original body, it is trapped in that form until again slain; it cannot leave its proto-form at will to return to the host and await a "better" form to possess. Proto-dracoliches can never cast spells, nor do they possess the chilling damage, breath weapon, or fear-causing powers of the dracolich — but they do have the hit points of the dracolich, its immunities to spells and to clerical turning, and the wisdom and intelligence of the dragon or dracolich. Strength and armor class are those of the possessed

body — and the dracolich can use any special magical or physical powers of the possessed body not destroyed by its own original death, including (recall its intelligence) status, possessions, and the like if the possessed body is of an intelligent, social race. A dracolich can **never** forcibly possess a living body. Details of the dracolich form follow:

## DRACOLICH (Night Dragon)

FREQUENCY *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1 (unless called by a ring of dragons)

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: As per former dragon type

HIT DICE: As per former dragon type

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: B, H, S, T

NO. OF ATTACKS: As per former dragon

type

DAMAGE/ATTACK: See below

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Breath weapon and spell use

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Spell immunities and spell use

MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below

INTELLIGENCE: As per individual dragon

ALIGNMENT Evil (any sort)

SIZE: L (dimensions vary)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil/nil

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 100%

Magic Use: 96%

Sleeping: 0%

LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: Varies/As per former dragon type, plus 1000 + 10/hp (if destroyed, along with host)

A dracolich is an undead creature, an unnatural transformation of evil dragonkind by powerful magic known to be practiced only by the mysterious Cult of the Dragon. Like human liches, dracoliches are immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold* (magical or natural), *electricity*, *insanity*, and *death spells* or *symbols*. By the nature of its making, a dracolich is also immune to potions or items of *dragon control*. Dracoliches can be affected only by magical attack forms (against which they have standard magic resistance, except for the immunities listed), or by monsters with magical properties of six or more hit dice. They cannot be poisoned, paralyzed, or held. They cannot be turned by clerics, and the knowledge of their ability to escape destruction works in dracoliches a transformation from cowardice to confidence; if a dracolich ever triumphs in any battle, from that point on, it is fearless (including immunity to magical *fear* or psionic attacks causing fear) and cannot be subdued.

A dracolich retains the keen senses (60° infravision, ability to *detect hidden* or *invisible creatures* within 1" per age level) it enjoyed in life, but its bodily processes are maintained magically; it need never eat again for sustenance. Most dragons enjoy

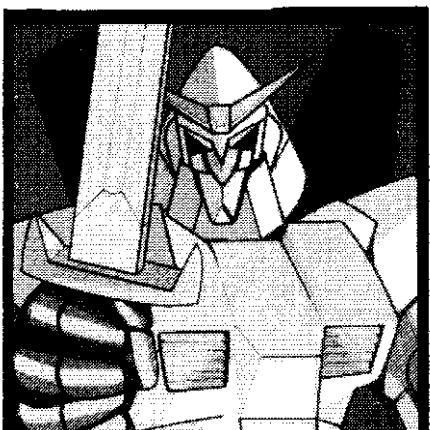
eating — and a dracolich must eat if it wishes to refuel its breath weapon — but a dracolich never feels weakness, fatigue, or hunger. Attacks upon a dracolich, due to its magical nature, do *not* gain "to hit" or damage modifiers by type and breath weapon of dragon attacked.

All physical attacks by a dracolich (jaws, claws, and wing or tail buffets, where applicable) do the damage dealt by the dragon in life, plus 2-16 hp chilling damage. Opponents struck who fail to save vs. paralyzation will also be paralyzed for 2-12 rounds by the touch of a dracolich. (The victim's immunity to cold damage, temporary or permanent, negates the chilling damage but not the chance of paralyzation.) Dracoliches cannot drain life energy levels. They retain the ability to cause *fear* in opponents (as per the *Monster Manual*) that they had in life; as a lich, the fear they cause is slightly stronger — opponents must save vs. spell against the *fear* aura at -1 (after all other modifiers are taken into account). The gaze of their glowing eyes can also *paralyze* creatures within 4"; creatures of 6th level or above, or 6 hit dice or greater, save at +3. If a creature ever saves against the gaze of a particular dracolich, it is immune to the gaze of that dracolich from then on.

Dracoliches can use any magic available to them in life; once they have acquired a full roster of spells (most are aided in this by the Cult), they can never gain new spells, but never need to study or concentrate to replenish their arsenal. Their magical natures revitalize their spell ability, each spell being replaced 1 day after it is cast. Instead of casting a spell, a dracolich may attempt *undead control* (as per a *potion of undead control*) once every three days. Such control, if successful, lasts for one turn only, upon any sort(s) of undead present, and such undead save at -3 vs. the control. Control can be exercised up to 6" distant; undead cannot be *summoned* by means of this power. While *undead control* is being exercised, spells cannot be cast. A dracolich cannot drop *control* of undead, and regain it immediately after casting a spell — it must wait three days before any attempt at *control* will again be successful. Dracoliches without spell-casting ability can use *undead control*.

Dracoliches can employ their breath weapons only three times a day, as in life. Note that they will *teleport* (if provided with a means, such as a magical ring, by the Cult or through their own acquisition of treasure), or merely leave their bodies behind and flee in spirit-form, to return to the vicinity of the host (often a sword in their own hoard) that contains the essence of their spirit before being reduced to zero hit points; few opponents can destroy a dracolich outright. A dracolich can be destroyed by a *power word, kill*, or by the destruction of its host at a time when a suitable corpse is not within range for the dragon's spirit to possess.

Dracoliches usually appear as they did in life, except save that their eyes are glowing



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points of light floating in dark eyesockets. Some few are reported to appear skeletal or semi-skeletal.

From all of this, it can be seen that members of the Cult of the Dragon are busy folk. Like independent adventurers, they are always seeking treasure — particularly "old" treasure found in ruined cities, tombs, or dungeons. If a party should encounter Cult members, it is likely that the Cultists will strike to slay, unless they already have treasure in their possession and believe they can escape or avoid those they have encountered. In any fight, members of the Cult of the Dragon are to be feared; they are almost all powerful fighters and magic-users, and will always be led by a mage or mages of 12th or greater level (usually 16th or so). Such leaders always wear a *ring of dragons*. As previously mentioned, this ring may serve to bring dracoliches to the aid of the Cultists, if they are sorely pressed.

Cult members also undertake regular visitations to all evil dragons and dracoliches they know of, offering riches for the hoards of each, proffering healing potions or physical aid in enlarging a dragon's treasure chamber or access tunnel, or arranging mechanical traps to slay adventurers who would plunder dragon-hoards. Any evil dragons they hear of or see evidence of are tracked down tirelessly, and attempts to persuade them into alliance with the Cult

are made — an arrangement that leaves their hoards and solitude largely intact, broken only by the occasional messenger from the Cult, who always carries news (news is something dragons of any sort are always eager for) of events in the Realms, the doings of the Cult, and the affairs of all dragons. Such messengers always ask if there is any service that they or their companions can render to the dragon or dracolich (and will undertake such tasks instantly if the nature of the task allows), always flatter the dragon respectfully in speech, and always bring large amounts of treasure as an offering. In return, the Cult asks that its members can seek sanctuary in the dragon's lair if *in extremis*, and that the dragon respond to any call for aid by a messenger or by means of a *ring of dragons*, by flying to the source ready for combat. Such messengers always announce their coming by utterance of a password chosen by the dragon, and always remind the dragon of the Cult's aim of raising dragonkind to rulership over all the world — a rule in which, of course, the particular dragon addressed will be of great rank and importance. The powers and apparent immortality of the dracoliches is mentioned, offhandedly, every so often, too.

After some years (at least ten winters, if the Cult is allowed to operate without hindrance) of visiting a particular dragon, the Cult messengers will begin to delicately broach the subject of lichdom, and finally

put it as a proposal to the dragon, promising immortality, and (if the dragon can cast spells) the Cult's provision of the most powerful possible spells. It is known that few dragons have refused, in the end, although some have taken a score of years or more to "think it over." Most sages do not believe that the Cult forces dragons into imbibing the potion that begins the process any longer, fearing that this might affect their ultimate loyalty to the Cult. The Cult will, as part of the process of achieving lichdom, ritually put to death a prepared dragon, if the latter so wishes. The Cult prefers (and urges instead) that dragons prepared for lichdom instead go forth and engage in combat too dangerous for them to contemplate in life — attacking a city, or the tower of a powerful wizard, perhaps, or a rival (non-Cult, and probably of good alignment) dragon — and die gloriously. This has the threefold advantage of damaging opponents or potential adversaries of the Cult, of increasing the Cult's reputation throughout the Realms (Cult members make sure word of such events gets around, and that the Cult is mentioned as a reason), and of urging the particular dragon to rise above its own innate cowardice, perhaps for the first time ever — a psychological feat that will serve it well when it becomes a dracolich.

Cult members are also kept busy finding, capturing, and tending (or training) dragon eggs, hatchlings, and creatures related to dragons, such as the wyvern, firedrake, ice lizard, fire lizard, airdragon (pterandon), pseudo-dragon, dracolisk, and dragonne — if these are not used for host bodies in attaining lichdom, they serve as work-beasts or mounts for the Cult, or in the continuing experiments to speed (and increase the power of the end product of) the process of dracolichdom. Cult members also gather at every opportunity any substances required as ingredients in the dracolich potion.

DMs should view the Cult as a vast network of evil (largely neutral evil) images and fighters, all dedicated to a cause and finding their lives' work and fulfillment in furthering that cause — a Cult which works tirelessly in loose teams of adventurers, working as described above (which activities could well bring Cult members into repeated encounters with player character adventurers), and communicating amongst themselves by means of magic, messengers on airdragons, innkeepers in certain Cult-run or Cult-sympathetic inns, and by means of message caches (often magically concealed writings on rock in prearranged locations). Cult fighters who attain the necessary levels often found a stronghold in some locale they favor, and it becomes a safe haven for the Cult. The owner of the stronghold continues to adventure for the Cult, and Cult members aid in the defense of the area (if necessary) and assist in the running of the stronghold owner's business while he or she is adventuring. "And the day will come," as Cult members say, "when the dead dragons rule over all."



The elven fighter/magic-user, Lady Valshea and her familiar take a break during their passage through Blue Rock Vale.

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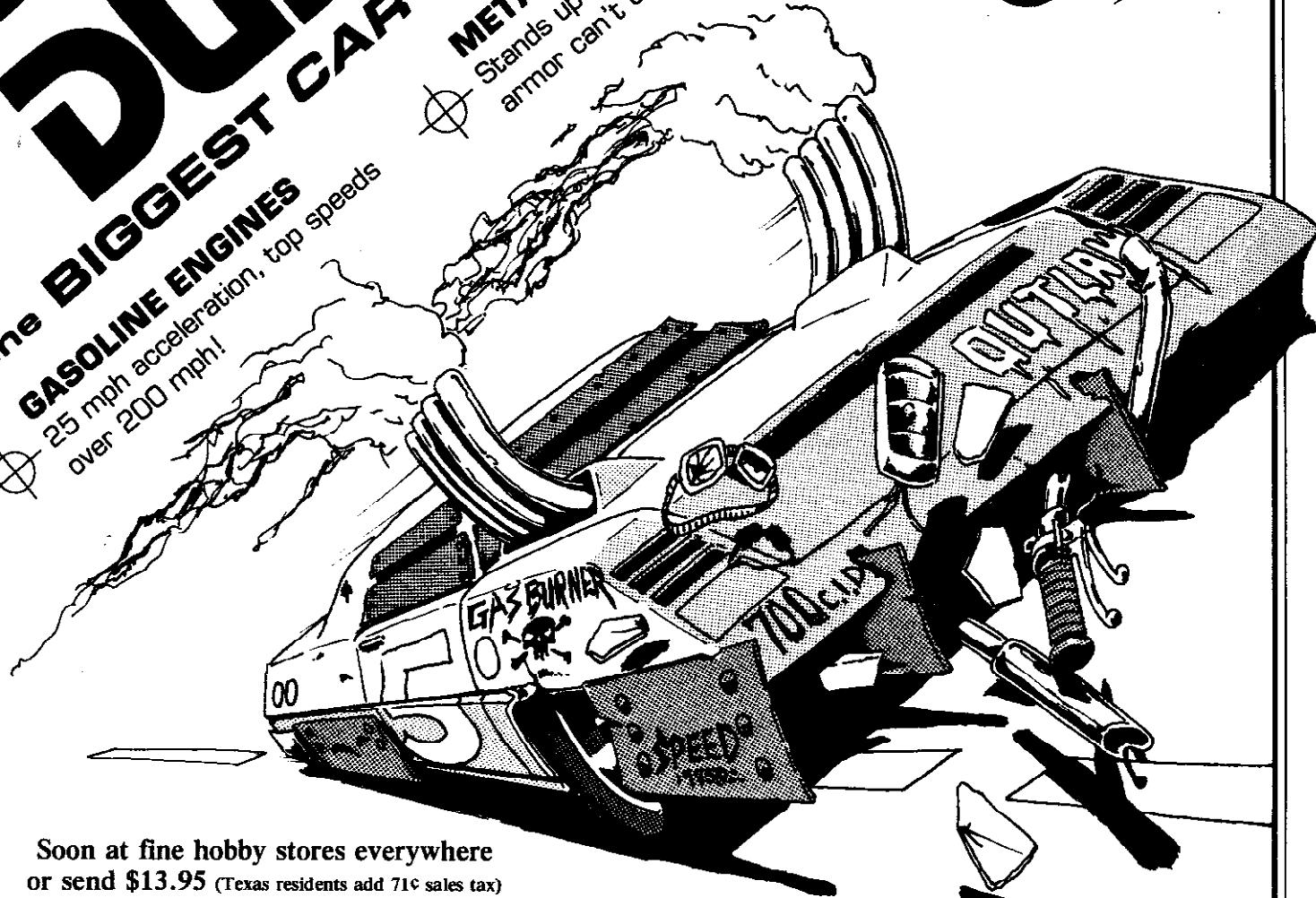
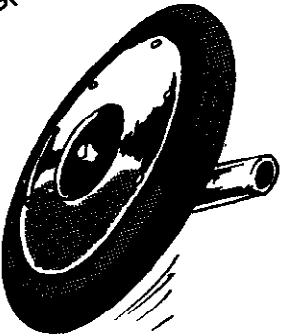
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# For better or Norse: I

## Equal time for the members of the Vanir

by Joel McGraw

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### *Editor's introduction*

*A while ago, we received these two manuscripts almost simultaneously. This one, by Joel McGraw, describes members of the Norse pantheon not covered in the Legends & Lore book, while Carl Sargent's article (see page 21) basically attempts to redefine some of the more prominent deities in the pantheon. They do cover some of the same ground, but in the final analysis we decided to print both articles — because, as both authors point out, the Norse pantheon is as popular as a pantheon can be.*

Of the many pantheons presented in *Legends & Lore*, the Norse mythos is one of the most popular. The barbaric gods described therein are perfect for the ever-popular "hack-and-slash" campaign. One failing of the mythos presented, however, is that it overlooks many important gods and creatures native to Norse legend. Doubtless, this is due in large part to the limited space in *L&L*. Nevertheless, the addition of these beings, many which provide needed deities for non-fighter and lawful characters, can add flavor and diversity to the pantheon.

In the Norse myths, there are two families of the gods: the Aesir and the Vanir. The Aesir are well detailed in *L&L*; the Vanir, however, are too lightly treated. The Vanir are a race of gods who deal extensively with weather, magic, and wealth. They dwell in a section of Gladsheim called Vanaheim. Although the majority of the gods of Vanaheim are good, some evil deities do reside there (and are detailed below).

The Vanir are most famous for their war with the Aesir. The conflict began when the Aesir tortured Gullveig (see below) for witchcraft. This offended the Vanir, and they demanded compensation. The Aesir answered their demand with war. After a long struggle in which neither side gained an advantage, a truce was made. To guarantee against further hostilities, the Aesir and Vanir exchanged hostages.

Another poorly addressed facet of the Norse mythos is the importance of Yggdrasil, the World Tree, which is said to bind together and support all of the planes of existence. The great tree has roots in many planes, and its branches stretch across the Astral Plane itself. At the tip of each root, there bubbles a well of great magical power. Among the most famous of these wells are Urd's Well (the fountain of youth), Mimir's Well (the well of wisdom), and Hvergelmir (the source of the rivers of the underworld).

### **ANGUR-BODA** (giantess-witch) "distress-bringer"

ARMOR CLASS: -2  
MOVE: 15"  
HIT POINTS: 200  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4-24 (+9)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Regeneration, resistance to fire*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%  
SIZE: L (10')  
ALIGNMENT *Neutral evil*  
CLERIC/DRUID: 10th level in each  
FIGHTER: As 16 + HD monster  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST 20th-level  
magic-user  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: 10th-level assassin  
MONK/BARD: *Nil*  
PSIONIC ABILITY *Nil*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*  
S: 21 (+4, +9) I: 22 W: 14  
D: 14 C: 23 CH: -1 or 23

Angur-boda is a fearsome giantess-witch who dwells in Jarnvid, a forest within Jotunheim. There, she and her fellow witches plot the ruin of the Aesir and await the day of Ragnarok. Though her natural form is that of a hideous giantess, she can appear as a stunningly beautiful woman. In the latter form, she often walks among both gods and men.

The witch is resistant to heat and flames as if she were wearing a double-strength *ring of fire resistance*. She regenerates lost hit points at a rate of one per round. The only way to stop this regeneration is to reduce her to -10 hp and then burn her entire body completely to ash (a process which takes at least one full day).

Though she prefers to use spells or assassination against her enemies, Angur-boda occasionally does battle with a skullcapped *staff of striking* that does 4-24 hp damage. This staff can *slay living* by touch, once per day.

Angur-boda is the mother of the monsters Fenris Wolf, Hel, and Jormungandr by Loki, and of Gerda by a frost giant.

### **EGDER** (the eagle of Yggdrasil)

FREQUENCY *Unique*  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 18" *in astral space; 3"/48"*  
(MC: D) *elsewhere*  
HIT DICE: 44 (200 hp)  
% IN LAIR: 100%  
TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 5  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-50/5-50/2-20/  
2-20/2-20  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%  
INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*  
ALIGNMENT *Neutral good*  
SIZE: L (100' wingspan)  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

Egder is the huge eagle that roosts in the uppermost branches of Yggdrasil on the Astral Plane, guarding the World Tree's trunk and branches from all vandals. The great bird stands forever on guard (and is thus never surprised), and on his beak a great falcon, Vedrfolnir (same stats and abilities as Egder except hit points [90], and damage [4-16/2-8/2-8/1-10]) sits, also keeping watch. (Note that movement rates vary for creatures on the Astral Plane, as intelligence determines movement speeds; see DRAGON® issue #67 or Best of DRAGON Magazine Volume V.)

Those foolish enough to tamper with Yggdrasil will be subjected to an attack by both birds. Egder attacks with his beak, claws, and wings as a 16 + HD monster. Any creature struck by both of his wings must save versus magic or be stunned and reeling (-4 to hit and on AC) for 1-4 rounds due to the great force of the blow. Both birds are immune to all the elements, poisons, petrification, and death magic. They are immune to mind-affecting spells as if they possessed a wisdom of 25. Both may also *teleport without error* at will, appearing anywhere within the Astral Plane or on a regular plane without needing to be near a flat surface, and both may *detect alignment* automatically.

There is great enmity between Egder and Nidhogg (see below). This enmity is fostered by a mischievous intelligent squirrel, Ratatosk (N, AC 0, HD 3, 24 hp, #ATT 1, DAM 1-8, saves as a 17th-level monk), who acts as a messenger for insults passing between the eagle and the dragon. Ratatosk is the only known being that successfully climbs the length of Yggdrasil from Hades to Gladsheim on a regular basis, and no one is sure how he does it so quickly.

## GERDA (goddess of agriculture and beauty)

### Lesser goddess

ARMOR CLASS: 1  
MOVE: 15"  
HIT POINTS: 280  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type* +8  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better  
*weapon to hit; also see below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%  
SIZE: M (6')  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*  
WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *Good alignments and farmers*  
SYMBOL: *Basket full of wheat*  
PLANE: *Gladsheim*  
CLERIC/DRUID: *14th-level in each*  
FIGHTER: *10th-level fighter*  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *8th-level magic-user*  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*  
MONK/BARD: *12th-level bard*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: VI  
S: 20 (+3, +8) I: 20 W: 21  
D: 24 C: 25 CH: 25

Gerda, wife of Frey, appears as a beautiful woman who shines with an intense aura. This nimbus glow will dazzle any attacker, so that he suffers a penalty of -4 on his chances to hit her. Her voice acts as a continual *suggestion* spell. She has absolute power over all cultivated plants and animals, and can cause them to give great yields or none at all.

Gerda is not related to the Aesir or Vanir, but is actually the daughter of Angur-boda and the frost giant Gymir. She was originally as evil as her parents, and would have remained so had not Frey stolen a glance from Odin's forbidden "all-seeing throne." Frey became so enamored in her radiance as it shone from Jotunheim that he could think of nothing else. The lovesick god sent Skirnir to Gymir's hall, and Skirnir eventually convinced Gerda to meet Frey. When Frey took Gerda into his arms, he melted her icy heart and she became his loving wife.

Farmers who worship Gerda give a portion of each harvest to her temples, where the grain is stored for times of famine.

## GRID (giantess-sorceress)

ARMOR CLASS: -1  
MOVE: 18"  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 (+10)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Surprised only 1 in 6*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%  
SIZE: L (18')  
ALIGNMENT *Neutral good*  
CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*  
FIGHTER: *As a 16 + HD monster*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *20th-level in each*  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*  
MONK/BARD: *Nil*  
PSIONIC ABILITY *Nil*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*  
S: 22 (+4,+10) I: 23 W: 20  
D: 14 C: 20 CH: 20

Grid, loveliest of all cloud giantesses, is a powerful sorceress. She is a staunch ally of the Aesir, but still roams freely about Jotunheim, for other giants fear her magic too much to try to hinder her. She is very knowledgeable about the affairs of Jotunheim, and can be counted upon to know when any giantish scheme is afoot.

Grid has several magic items which she is never without: a girdle, a pair of gauntlets, and a wand. The girdle she wears is identical to Thor's girdle of strength, and gives her a strength of 24 when she wears it. Her gauntlets insulate her hands from any heat or cold. Grid's wand (a staff to human-sized creatures) acts as both a *staff of the magi* and a *staff of striking* that does 3-30 hp damage per hit.

She is the mother of Vidar by Odin, and Uller by Thor.

## GULLVEIG (goddess of black magic and greed)

### Lesser goddess

ARMOR CLASS: 0  
MOVE: 12"  
HIT POINTS: 275  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better  
*weapon to hit*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 95%  
SIZE: M (5'')  
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *Misers, thieves, and evil beings who deal with magic*  
SYMBOL: *Gold coin*  
PLANE: *Gehenna and Gladsheim (Vanaheim)*  
CLERIC/DRUID: *13th-level druid*  
FIGHTER: *Nil*  
MAGIC-USER/ISSUIONIST: *Special*  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: *17th-level thief*  
MONK/BARD: *Nil*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: I  
S: 15 I: 25 W: 12  
D: 25 C: 19 CH: 25

Gullveig, a Vanir, is a fantastically beautiful goddess who always wears one million gold pieces worth of jewelry. She has the ability to cast any magic-user or illusionist spell an unlimited number of times as a 20th-level spell-caster. Her greed has caused her to develop the ability to sense treasure as per a *potion of treasure finding*. She often uses her thieving abilities to take the treasure she finds to her great hoard on the plane of Gehenna.

Misers, witches, and thieves worship Gullveig. As the witch goddess, she possesses a *broom of flying* that will carry her at a movement rate of 48" and will act as a broom of animated attack on her command or when any other being touches it. She also has a *crystal ball* with clairaudience and a cauldron with which she can brew any potion or other liquid desired.

Worship of Gullveig takes place on moonless nights by thieves and misers, and at full moons by witches.

## HATI HRODVITNISSON and SKOLL (wolves which pursue the sun and moon)

FREQUENCY: *Each unique*  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: -3  
MOVE: 18"/48" (MC: E)  
HIT DICE: 33 (150 hp)  
% IN LAIR: *Nil*  
TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-50  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better  
*weapon to hit; also see below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 40%  
INTELLIGENCE: *Average*  
SIZE: L (10' high at shoulder)  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

Hati Hroditnisson, the wolf that chases the moon through the skies, and his brother, Skoll, pursuer of the sun, are descendants of the Fenris Wolf. They fly closely behind the sun and moon in an attempt to catch and devour them. Their efforts cause the eclipses.

The wolves fight as 16 + HD monsters, biting once per round for 5-50 hp damage, though they will not attack any being unless it hinders their pursuit. Skoll is immune to all fire and heat-based attacks, and Hati Hroditnisson is immune to all cold-based attacks.

## HERMOD (god of thieves and messengers)

### Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: -2  
MOVE: 48"/48" (MC: A)  
HIT POINTS: 300  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20 (+8)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better  
*weapon to hit*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%  
SIZE: M (5'')  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *Thieves and messengers*  
SYMBOL: *Pouch of coins*  
PLANE: *Gladsheim*  
CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*

FIGHTER: 15th-level ranger

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 10th-level illusionist

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 25th-level thief

MONK/BARD: 12th-level in each

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

S: 20(+3,+8) I: 24 W: 15

D: 25 C: 19 CH: 19

Hermod, a son of Odin, is the patron of all thieves and messengers. His swiftness afoot, skill of stealth, and foolhardy courage are renowned. The god serves as the welcomer of the dead heroes to Asgard and as the messenger of the gods.

He appears as a slight man wearing leather armor and a *cloak of elvenkind*. He carries a *shortsword* +5 that does 2-20 hp damage per strike.

Clerics of Hermod gain one level of thieving ability for every four levels of clerical ability they attain. Many of his clerics are dual classed cleric-thieves; these clerics gain their new thieving abilities cumulative with their old. There are often small shrines to Hermod in thieves' guilds.

## MIMIR

(god of knowledge, wisdom, and inland waters)

### Greater god

ARMOR CLASS: -7

MOVE: /6"(MC: B)

HIT POINTS: 250

NO. OF ATTACKS: 0

DAMAGE/ATTACK: Nil

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%

SIZE: S (2½' dia.)

ALIGNMENT: Lawful good

WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: Lawful good and all those who seek knowledge

SYMBOL: Pool of water

PLANE: Gladshiem (Jotunheim)

CLERIC/DRUID: 25th-level cleric/14th-level druid

FIGHTER: Nil

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 30th-level in each

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Legend lore as a 23rd-level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: I

S: - I: 25 W: 25

D: 24 C: - CH: 25

Mimir appears as the head of an aged giant with a flowing white beard. He is supported by levitation, and drifts slowly about as he wills. He has the ability to cast his spells using only verbal components. Mimir possesses an unlimited duration **telekenisis** ability (which can lift 7500 gp weight) and several permanent **unseen servants**.

The god of wisdom dwells on the edge of Jotunheim, at the tip of a root of Yggdrasil.

There bubbles the Well of Wisdom, where Mimir drinks daily. Any being that drinks from this well will receive 1-4 points of wisdom, once per being; those beings who already possess a 25 wisdom gain total omniscience concerning all that has happened up to that time, and a sketchy knowledge of the future. The price for a drink from the well's waters is thus very great, for Mimir will only accept something of equal value as payment. Odin also drinks from the well; he paid Mimir for the privilege with one of his eyes. Mimir placed the eye at the bottom of his well, and with it can peruse the universe (treat as an unlimited duration *crystal ball* with no penalty for viewing different planes).

Once Mimir had a complete body, but he lost it after the war between the Aesir and the Vanir. As a pledge of good conduct, the races of the gods exchanged hostages. The Aesir sent to Vanaheim Hoenir, brother of Odin, and with him Mimir as his advisor. At first, the Vanir were impressed by Hoenir's handsomeness, but soon found that he was quite stupid. As they dared not harm Odin's brother, they angrily seized Mimir, cut off his head, and sent it to Odin to show their dissatisfaction. The bereaved Odin cast many spells over the head and returned it to life, whereupon Mimir returned to his well to live. Odin often goes there to consult with the ancient giant.

The god is worshipped almost exclusively by sages, magic-users, and illusionists. Mimir's temples often double as universities, and always have large libraries.

## NIDHOGG

(dragon of the underworld)

FREQUENCY: Unique

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"/30" (MC: E)

HIT DICE: 44 (200 hp)

% IN LAIR: 99%

TREASURE TYPE: 100% H, R, S, T, V

NO. OF ATTACKS: 4

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/2-12/5-40/6-36

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Breath weapons, poison, and magic use

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Genius

ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil

SIZE: L (80' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 100%

Magic-Use: 100%

Sleeping: 5%

Nidhogg is the fearsome dragon that gnaws on the Niflheim (Hades) root of Yggdrasil and feeds on the souls of the dead. It is the father of many other serpents in Niflheim which bedevil the dead.

The dragon can fight as a 16 + HD monster with two poisonous claw attacks (save

vs. poison at -2 or die), a bite, and a lash with its wickedly spiked tail. It can also breathe one of its two breath weapons – fire in a cone, 9" long and 3" wide at the base, or a cloud of chlorine gas, 5" long, 4" wide, and 3" high. It may use each breath weapon three times a day. Nidhogg can also use two magic-user spells of each level, one through six.

Nidhogg is a serpentlike dragon with huge, membranous wings. Its upper body and legs are glossy black, while its underbelly is a dull grey.

## NJORD

(god of wind, sea, ships, & wealth)

### Greater god

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 18"/18" (MC: C)//48"

HIT POINTS: 390

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4-40 (+12)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Wind and water spells

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100% in water; 70% otherwise

SIZE: M (7')

ALIGNMENT; Neutral good

WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: Neutral good, and all those wishing rain or who depend on the sea

SYMBOL: Longship

PLANE: Gladshiem (Noatun)

CLERIC/DRUID: 13th-level in each

FIGHTER: 17th-level fighter

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 15th-level magic-user

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: 10th-level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

S: 24(+6,+12) I: 23 W: 25

D: 24 C: 25 CH: 23

Njord appears as a handsome, bearded man of massive build. He spends his time calming Aegir's storms, granting fishermen good catches, and wading barefoot in the ocean around Noatun, his seaside hall. He can use any spell which deals with wind or water as a 30th-level spell-caster and has absolute command over all sea creatures of a non-divine status. In battle, the god uses a trident +3 that does 4-40 hp damage per hit.

Njord's wife is Skadi, the daughter of the giant Thjazi. This unlikely pair was formed when Loki mischievously offered Skadi her choice of gods for a husband, as compensation for the death of her father, who had been killed for kidnapping Idun. The other gods, bound by Loki's offer, decreed that she should be permitted to see only their feet when she chose. Thinking the cleanest feet would belong to the handsome Balder, she accidentally chose Njord, whose feet were white and clean from walking in the sea.

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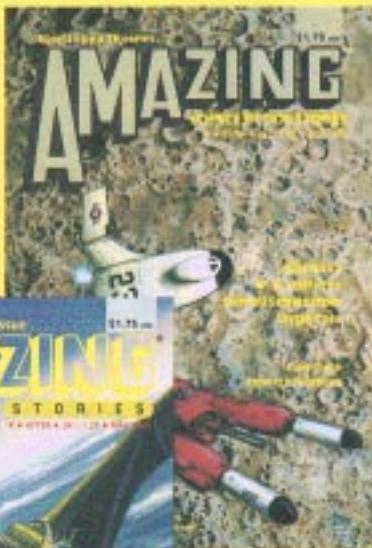
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Clerics of Njord are required to use a trident, and only a trident, as a weapon. They also must carry only so much equipment as they can swim with. Mariners, merchants, and fishermen are Njord's most devout worshipers, and they sacrifice to him by dropping ale and baked fish (the god's favorite foods) into the sea.

*(goddess of waves and whirlpools)*

**Demigoddess**

ARMOR CLASS: -1  
MOVE: 12"/36"  
HIT POINTS: 195  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 (+10)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Ensnarement*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better  
weapon to hit  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 30%  
SIZE: M (7') or L (40')  
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral  
WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: Chaotic neutral  
SYMBOL: Net  
PLANE: Gladsheim  
CLERIC/DRUID: 10th-level druid  
FIGHTER: 10th-level fighter  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: Nil  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: 5th-level assassin  
MONK/BARD: Nil  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
S: 22 (+4,+10) I: 20 W: 7  
D: 20 C: 24 CH: 7 or -1

Ran, the sea-ogress wife of Aegir, has a huge hall to which the souls of the drowned go. Her hospitality makes the hall a rival to Odin's Valhalla. She often ventures to the seas of the material planes to overturn ships, catch them in her net, and add its treasure to her own great hoard. Her worshipers sacrifice one of their number or a captured enemy before each voyage so they will not suffer this fate.

The goddess can create waves and whirlpools large enough to sink all but the largest ships. She does this only rarely, however, as her daughters, the Tempests (see below), enjoy sinking ships for her.

In combat, she uses a harpoon +3 (spear) that does 3-30 hp damage. She will also use her giant net of snaring to entrap opponents, so they can be disposed of easily. When underwater, Ran is 40' tall and terrible to behold.

**SKADI**

*(goddess of winter and skiing)*

**Lesser goddess**

ARMOR CLASS: 0  
MOVE: 18"  
HIT POINTS: 330  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20 (+11)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** *Immune to cold-based attacks*

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** 25%

**SIZE:** M (7')

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral (chaotic good tendencies)

**WORSHIPER'S ALIGN:** Neutral good and chaotic good

**SYMBOL:** Snowshoes

**PLANE:** Gladsheim (Jotunheim)

**CLERIC/DRUID:** 10th-level druid

**FIGHTER:** 16th-level ranger

**MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST:** Nil

**THIEF/ASSASSIN:** Nil

**MONK/BARD:** 5th-level bard

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** VI

S: 23 (+5,+11) I: 20 W: 17

D: 24 C: 24 CH: 20

Skadi, the daughter of the frost giant Thjazi, is a mighty huntress, second only to Uller. She dwells in Jotunheim, where she gives chase to many fantastic creatures. She bears a spear +4 that strikes for 2-20 hp, and a longbow +4 with which she has quadruple normal range.

Due to her frost giant ancestry, Skadi is immune to all cold-based attacks. To aid her in traveling the snowbound wastes of Jotunheim, she uses a pair of magical snowshoes and a set of magic skis. Her snowshoes enable her to move across snow-covered ground at a rate of 24". Her magic skis give her a movement rate of 32", but may only be used in clear snowy terrain.

She is the wife of Njord, and the mother of Frey and Freya.

**THE TEMPESTS**

*(the nine daughters of Aegir and Ran)*

**FREQUENCY:** Unique

**NO. APPEARING:** 9

**ARMOR CLASS:** -3

**MOVE:** 6"/36"

**HIT DICE:** 22 (100 hp)

**% IN LAIR:** 5%

**TREASURE TYPE:** A, B (on individuals)

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 2-20

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** Whirlpool, ramming

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** +1 or better weapon to hit

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** 30%

**INTELLIGENCE:** High

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic neutral (evil)

**SIZE:** L (30' tall)

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** Nil

**Attack/Defense Modes:** Nil

The Tempests are the daughters of Aegir and Ran. These terrible nine sisters roam the oceans sinking all ships they encounter. They appear as hideous, huge, sea-green women, with hair the color of foaming waves.

They each attack once per round as a 16 + HD monster, striking for 2-20 hp damage. When attacking a ship, the Tem-

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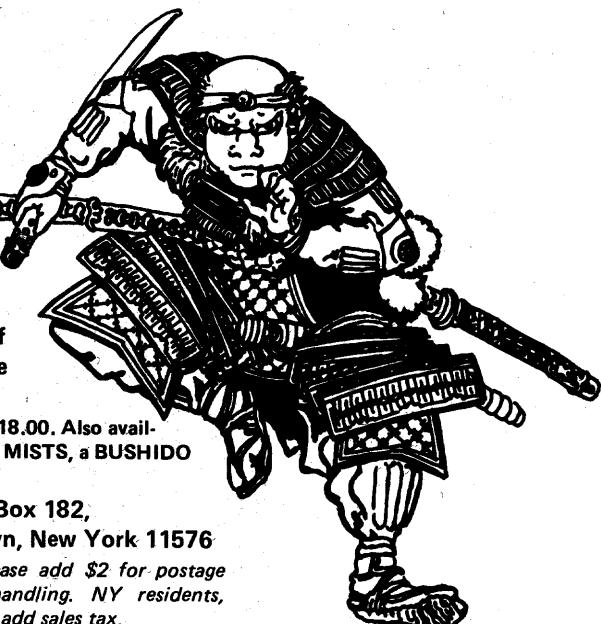
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pests will attempt to form a whirlpool to sink it. Such a whirlpool takes only 5-8 rounds to form, but exposes the Tempests to missile fire and spell attack. Once formed, the whirlpool can sink a ship of up to 60' in length. Larger ships will be rammed. Each ramming does one point of structural damage to the ship, but also injures the attacking Tempest for 1-4 hp damage.

### UTGARD-LOKI

(prince of frost giants, lord of Utgard)

#### Frost giant

ARMOR CLASS: 0  
MOVE: 15"  
HIT POINTS: 250  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4-24 (+10)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immune to cold-based attacks  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%  
SIZE: L (18' tall)  
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil  
PLANE: Gladsheim  
CLERIC/DRUID: 15th-level cleric  
FIGHTER: 16th-level fighter  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 25th-level illusionist  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil  
MONK/BARD: Nil  
PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

S: 22(+4, +10) I: 24 W: 15  
D: 19 C: 23 CH: 19

Utgard-Loki is the cleric/illusionist ruler of Utgard. Unlike most giants, Utgard-Loki controls his underlings more by wit than brute strength. He defends his city domain through the use of illusions and other magic. His deceptions have fooled many, including Loki and Thor.

### VAFTHRUDNIR

(wisest of the jotuns)

#### Frost giant

ARMOR CLASS: 2  
MOVE: 12"  
HIT POINTS: 168  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4-24  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Spells, hurl rocks for 2-20 hp  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold attacks  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%  
SIZE: L (16' tall)  
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil  
CLERIC/DRUID: 10th-level druid  
FIGHTER: As a 16+ HD monster  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 20th-level magic-user  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil  
MONK/BARD: Nil  
PSIONIC ABILITY: IV  
S: 21 (+4, +9) I: 24 W: 25  
D: 12 C: 21 CH: 12

Vafthrudnir is an incredibly old, wise, and evil giant who lives alone deep in the wastes of Jotunheim. There, he spends time studying the events of the universe and reading ancient tomes. As his knowledge is renowned, many other beings attempt to gain fame by striving against him in wisdom. The contest is based on questioning, with Vafthrudnir asking all his questions first; if one question goes unanswered, the challenger loses his life! None have ever known enough to answer all the giant's questions and then have their turn to ques-

tion Vafthrudnir himself. If any player characters wish to try anyway, they have no chance to defeat the giant unless they, too, have wisdom scores of at least 25.

### VOLUNDR (god of blacksmiths)

#### Demigod

ARMOR CLASS: -5  
MOVE: 12"  
HIT POINTS: 300  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4-40 (+ 14)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immune to fire and heat-based attacks, +4 or better weapon to hit  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 35%  
SIZE: M (5')  
ALIGNMENT: Lawful good  
WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: Lawful good  
PLANE: Gladsheim  
CLERIC/DRUID: Nil  
FIGHTER: 18th-level fighter  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 20th-level magic-user  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil  
MONK/BARD: Nil  
PSIONIC ABILITY: IV  
S: 25 (+ 7, + 14) I: 25 W: 18  
D: 21 C: 25 CH: 5

This god appears as a man so stocky and massive of build that many believe him to be a large dwarf. He is the patron of all smiths, and as such spends most of his time forging weapons or blessing the works of his followers. He carries a huge and unbalanced hammer at all times; this crude-looking iron weapon is actually a +3 weapon which does 4-40 hp damage per strike, and has enchantments upon it to make supple and bend all metal it strikes (have the metal save vs. fire to avoid this affect; artifacts are immune to this).

Smiths of both the dwarf and human race worship Volundr. Those who do exemplary work at all times can expect to be rewarded (DM's discretion) some day with a bar (100 gp weight) of solid adamantine with which to forge a weapon.

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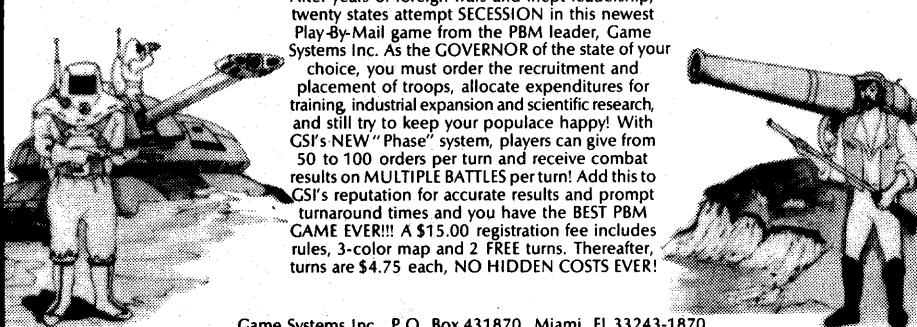
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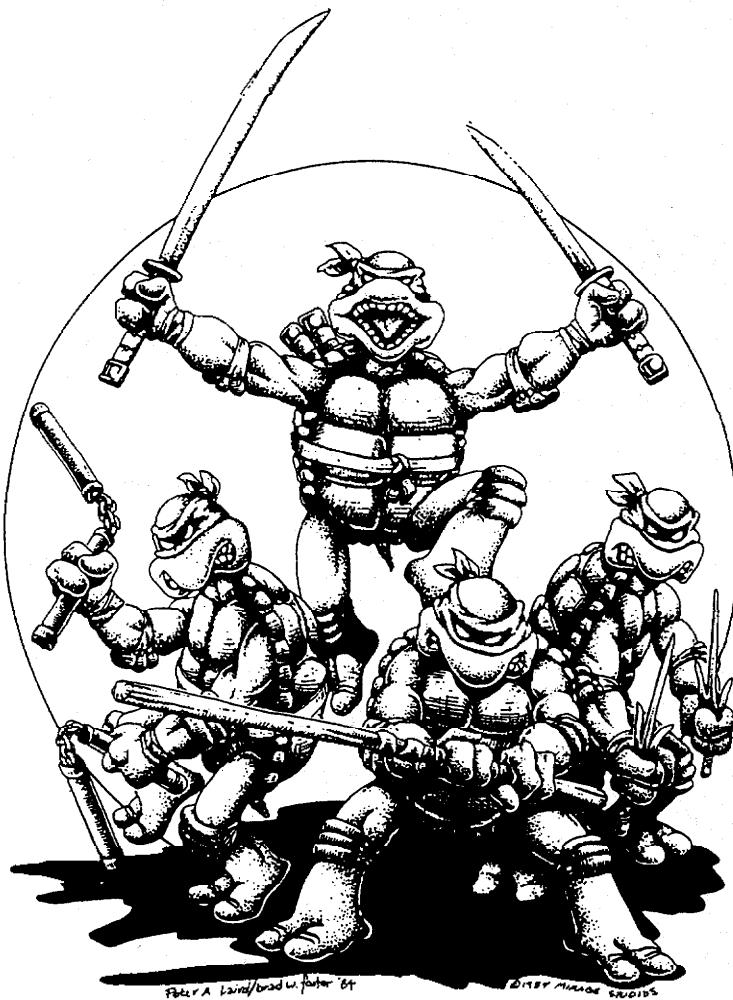
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# For Better or Norse: II

## New descriptions of some old favorites

by Carl Sargent

---

The Norse mythos must be one of the most popular with AD&D® game players – for good reasons. The Norse deities are colorful, full of character, and most people have heard of Odin and Thor at least, so there's an element of familiarity that isn't present for, say, the Finnish or Chinese pantheons (to most Western readers). Also, the Norse deities involved themselves closely with the affairs of their followers, which can make for exciting campaigning.

On the other hand, there are often stereotyped elements in AD&D Norse campaigns. The vast majority of PCs are followers of Odin or Thor, and some of the players whose PCs are Thor's followers seem at times almost as dim-witted as the deity himself and twice as bloodthirsty. Some of these problems could be overcome if PCs selected other deities for their patrons. There are four others who could fit the bill here, if somewhat revised and more detailed accounts of them were available for gamers than are available in the admirable *Legends & Lore* tome. These four are the twin Vanir (Frey and Freya), their father Niord (who doesn't feature in the *L&L* volume), and Loki – if a radically changed unofficial version of Loki, the one I'll describe later, was employed in a Norse campaign.

As just one example of how more creative gaming could be encouraged if these deities were more prominent in Norse campaigns, consider the AD&D Norse druid. Such a character would be an obvious follower of Frey if that deity were given his proper role as a god of fertility, nature, and abundance. Of course, druids as such did not exist in the real Norse culture, but in terms of the AD&D game they would fit in very well with Frey's patronage.

Before detailing these revisions, some words of caution. My suggestions are, of course, unofficial – but the *L&L* volume is, I think, a source volume rather than a rule book like the *DMG*, and it is likely that individual DMs modify pantheons from *L&L* for use in their campaigns far more often than they erroneously alter *DMG* rules. Also, there is no question of either my suggestions or the *L&L* descriptions being the "right" ones. The source material of Norse mythology – the sagas and poems, and (for our purposes) historical evidence concerning how Norse deities were actually worshipped – is simply too inconsistent for any single reading of it to be the right one. However, the most reliable of this evidence – that of religious practices –

perhaps supports the reinterpretation of Frey I suggest here, and it does give some useful hints as to how clerics of Frey and Freya might specialize their interests.

So, what we have here is my unofficial interpretation of the four deities, the Vanir, and Loki – but I hope to show that using them in Norse adventuring can provide more creative gaming. Only if players and DMs put this to the test will they find out for sure!

### NIORD

Niord is the father of Frey and Freya and the senior deity of the Vanir group. It was he who acted as the main negotiator following the disastrous war between the Vanir and the Aesir (Odin, Frigga, Tyr, Thor and others). The Aesir had meted out some unfriendly treatment to a visiting witch in Asgard who was on friendly terms with the Vanir, who – in retaliation – besieged the Aesir and demolished the walls of Asgard with their battle-magic. However, it became clear that neither side could win, and a truce was declared with hostages being exchanged. Niord, with Frey and Freya (and Kvasir, a Vanir deity who figures in legends so strange and inconsistent that he can't be adapted to the AD&D game) came to dwell in Asgard, and the two Aesir gods Honir and Mimir were detached to Vanaheim. Clearly, the captivity wasn't onerous, and the two groups of deities became friendly with each other.

Niord is a sea god, and he dwells (after his "captivity" is over) in Noatun, the great harbor in Vanaheim. Unlike the capricious Aegir, Niord is a protector of seafarers; sailors pray to him for good sailing weather and he protects them against shipwreck and storms. Since Aegir spends little time in Asgard (and none at all in Vanaheim), direct conflict between them would be unlikely, but their interests seem to come into opposition. Clerics of the two gods would have a strong enmity for each other.

Niord is also a god of the dead, but again as a protector. While Odin and Freya take the souls of warriors slain on the battlefield, Niord is the god who protects the passage of the souls of ordinary folk and less adventurous types to the afterlife. Many Norse people were buried with small arches formed of ship's wood over their bodies, as a symbol of Niord's protection, just as many warriors were buried with their ships. Niord's pro-

jective roles seem to suggest fairly clearly that he is of lawful good alignment, and as the senior Vanir deity he should be considered a greater deity, just as his children are.

Two final points about Niord. Firstly, he does have a wife, the giantess Skadi, who married him in very unusual circumstances. Skadi's father had been murdered by the Aesir, and she came to Asgard demanding a deity for a husband in recompense. This was permitted, but she had to make her choice without seeing the god's faces, by choosing the god with the fairest ankles (this kind of thing could only happen in Norse mythology). She presumably agreed, hoping to recognize Balder by his fair ankles, but it was Niord (maybe his feet were smoothed by sea-water) who was chosen. Alas, Skadi lives in the mountains, and hates the sea, while Niord hates the mountains, so husband and wife see very little of each other.

Second, there actually exists in Norway an island named Njardalog – literally, "bath of Niord" – and there are hints and allusions in Norse sagas to a magical island-home of Niord; such a setting could provide a very unorthodox and interesting Norse adventure in the hands of a skilled DM.

Niord's clerics can only be of lawful good alignment, but it seems likely that he might be well-disposed to those of lawful neutral alignment whose activities furthered his interests. Given Niord's role as protector of the dead, his clerics would be expected to have an unyielding hatred of undead creatures as an abomination, and any adventuring to combat such creatures or aquatic monsters would strongly attract them. Niord does not seem to have required sacrifices from his devotees, and prayer and supplications might well suffice. But, if this is a generosity by comparison with other Norse deities, Niord is likely to be very strict concerning lawfulness. Even consorting with chaotics, let alone such utter folly as assisting them with healing spells or the like, would not be acceptable behavior for clerics of Niord, and his favors would be quickly withdrawn and a harsh quest set for the cleric – unless the chaotics were followers of Frey or Freya!

### FREY

A god of great power, Frey divides his time between Vanaheim and Alfheim, land of the "light elves" in the Norse world, making rare visits to Asgard. Frey is the

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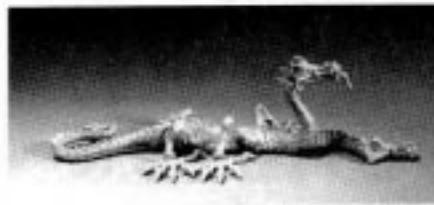
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great nature and fertility deity of the Norse pantheon, and he is, of course, a weather deity. It is to Frey that ordinary folk pray for good weather for the harvest and the growth of crops. At harvest-time, there are great feasts in Frey's honor, and it is a measure of his closeness to humankind (and elves) that he is said to travel in a wagon from feast to feast, disguised as an ordinary man. Frey is the great source of natural power which ensures abundance in the harvest and the continuation of life in a harsh world.

Frey is not a warrior god, and perhaps the L&L choice of an ice-blue two-handed sword as his symbol is slightly unfortunate here. Frey is a god of benign aspect; there are explicit references in sagas to the gratefulness of Frey's followers that, while other gods (notably Odin) sometimes demanded human sacrifices, all Frey ever asked of them was the sacrifice of clothes and valuables. Of course, human sacrifices aren't part of Odin's worship in the AD&D game, but this does show that Frey is a less stern god than many. Also, we know that weapons could not be carried into Frey's temples in Norse times since the god would not permit it. Further, warriors sometimes bore Frey's symbol — the boar's head — into battle on their shields as a protective motif, not as a sign of offensive power. Frey seems clearly to be a peace-loving, benign god.

Interestingly, the one surviving tale about him concerns his love-sickness for the giant-

ess Gerd, living in Jotunheim, and his dispatching his human acolyte Skirnir to do his wooing for him (which Skirnir achieves by using some most unchivalrous threats and some gloriously inventive curses). While romance is mostly the province of his sister Freya, this tale about Frey is a long way from the epic wanderings of Odin or the bloodthirsty questings of Thor.

Two animals are sacred to Frey: the boar and the horse. Frey possesses the magical boar Gullinbursti; of course, the boar's head is a symbol both of Frey's protection and of fertility. Also, it is known that Frey's temples were often adjacent to great stables, where horses consecrated to Frey were kept; these could only be ridden by his clerics after a suitable ceremony. In the extremely unlikely event that a DM wants to mix things by including a cavalier in his Norse campaign, here is an obvious opportunity!

Frey is clearly a neutral good deity, and it seems plausible that he would accept followers of any non-evil alignment whose behavior is in keeping with one or more of his varied concerns. Frey's clerics, however, would have to be of good alignment or else absolute neutrals whose main concern was the balance of nature (druids being the obvious example). Ordinary folk in Norse adventures are very likely to be worshipers of Frey, more likely in fact than they are to be followers of Odin or Thor or any other deity (except perhaps Freya), for Odin and Thor are gods one might fear or respect, but they are completely unlovable. Moreover, Frey's concerns are so close to the lives of ordinary people.

Frey's clerics would have many and obvious reasons for adventuring, and his senior clerics may expect considerable favor from Frey if they have been faithful. One story tells of how Frey prevented any snow from falling on the burial mound of a much-loved cleric of his, since he could not bear snow or frost to lie between the body of his servant and himself. If it seems that Frey's clerics might be too pacifistic for AD&D adventures, any source of evil directly affecting the well-being of the earth will always arouse enmity from them.

#### FREYA

Beautiful and charismatic, Freya is simply the Norse goddess; Frigga and Sif and Idun are nonentities compared with her. Freya is often stated to be the most beautiful of the goddesses, and when giants are in a position to seek bargains with the Norse gods, it is always her hand in marriage which they seek. So, one aspect of Freya is the goddess of love and romance, and also the patroness of young women and lovers — but also of marriage, childbirth and young children. Freya's concerns are quite extensive,

However, Freya has two other spheres of concern. First, she is a goddess of the dead. Riding with the Valkyries, she shares the souls of fallen warriors with Odin; as some

dwell in Valhalla, some dwell in Sessrumnir (the Hall of Seats), Freya's great hall in Vanaheim. She and Odin do not conflict in this sphere, as the sharing of those fallen in battle is agreed between them. Indeed, Freya is on very good terms with Odin, and all the other Aesir.

One reason for these particularly friendly relations may be linked with another of Freya's spheres of interest: the use of certain types of magic. Legends tell that Freya instructed the Aesir in the use of certain aggressive magics after the Vanir-Aesir trade-off. It is known that her priestesses (for Freya favors female over male clerics, although she will readily accept either) practiced a certain form of magic known as *seidir*, which involved foretelling future events while in a trance state after certain religious rituals. In AD&D terms, one would expect Freya's clerics to specialize in the use of divination-type spells.

In many ways, Freya seems possibly more likely to be chaotic good than the neutral good alignment which the *L&L* tome suggests for her. She is extremely self-willed and possessed of a powerful temper. Upon learning that Thrym, Lord of fire giants, named her as his price for returning Thor's hammer, Freya was so enraged that the force of contraction of her neck muscles shattered Brisingamen, her magical necklace. Fortunately for her, Loki got her off the hook, but more of this later. Freya is also very impulsive, and she will do whatever she considers appropriate to achieve her ends, although no trace of evil contaminates her behavior. In one of the more scandalous Norse tales, Freya grants her favors to a group of dwarves in order to obtain Brisingamen. Indeed, many tales of and allusions to Freya are fairly scandalous, which could make adventuring with her clerics a most interesting-prospect. . . .

Just as her brother Frey has a magical boar that is mentioned in *L&L*, so does Freya, in addition to the falcon cloak and great cats and chariot mentioned in that volume. Her boar's name is Hildisvin, and for game purposes he can be treated as identical in nature to Gullinbursti. Likewise, as Frey has his faithful Skirnir, Freya has a human acolyte, Ottar the Simple; again, he can be treated as similar to Skirnir save for a rather lower intelligence. Finally, Freya does have a husband, Od, who is lost, and for whom she weeps tears of gold, and a daughter Hnoss (the name means gem), but of Od and Hnoss we know very little.

Knowledgeable readers might be aware that the distinction between Freya and Frigga (or Fricka) is rather blurred, and it has been suggested that they are alternative names for the same goddess. Also, Od is suspiciously similar to Odin, reinforcing this suggestion. But, in AD&D terms, separating Freya and Frigga makes good sense and widens the pantheon. It also gives Freya a more distinct identity as one of the Vanir.

Freya's interests are so broad that no

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cleric of hers will lack a reason for adventuring. It seems plausible that she would accept any non-lawful, non-evil character as a follower if they were faithful to her and furthered her interests. Possibly she might even accept a cleric from any of these four alignments, although individual DMs might want to narrow the range somewhat (perhaps to chaotic good and neutral good only).

The Vanir are, I think, very attractive deities for the more thoughtful AD&D Norse gamer to which his or her characters may pledge allegiance. They are powerful deities whose central focus of power is the very pulse of life — the forces of nature and growth and abundance — and they vary between Niord's lawfulness, Frey's neutral goodness, and Freya's chaotic bent. (It should go without saying that Niord's dislike of chaotics will be tempered by indulgence where his daughter is concerned.) But, for those of rather more villainous inclinations which stop short of outright evil, and who like to play chaotic neutral characters, the choice of patron deity in the Norse world is rather poor. Only Aegir and Uller, both with specialized interests and, in Uller's case at least, undetailed and colorless, are chaotic-neutral deities and both are only lesser gods. Which brings us to Loki, and my interpretation of him as chaotic neutral, which — if adopted by DMs — would bring a greater god of chaos into the picture. So, how can Loki be seen as in this fashion?

## LOKI

Loki is neither Aesir nor Vanir; he is the son of a giant, Farbauti, but he is a blood-brother to Odin and dwells in Asgard. He has a wife, Sigyn, and two sons. He is restless, impulsive, talkative, very cunning, and very sociable. Frequently, he adventures with Odin and Thor. The "oldest" legend concerning Loki tells us a lot about him.

After the A&esir-Vanir war, the walls of Asgard were completely demolished by Vanir battle-magic. Shortly after peace broke out, a giant approached Heimdall with an offer to rebuild the walls — for a price. Odin consented to listen to him, and the gods gathered in counsel. The giant offered to rebuild the walls in 18 months, but he wanted the sun and moon in return (and, of course, Freya). The gods were about to dismiss him in anger when Loki suggested to Odin that he should agree, but only allow the giant six months. After all, Loki pointed out, to do this in six months was clearly impossible, and then the walls would at least be partially rebuilt for nothing. (Why the gods, with their divine powers, couldn't rebuild walls is one of the inconsistencies which are part and parcel of Norse legend.) The other deities agreed. Indeed, not only did they think Loki's idea was a good one, but many of them wished that they had thought of it themselves.

Reluctantly, the giant agreed, but with one proviso: that he was allowed the help of his stallion, Svalfari. Odin agreed to this.

Of course, the giant and his steed were so incredibly strong that it became horribly clear that they were going to rebuild the walls in six months after all. With a few days left and Freya *extremely* unhappy (tears of gold everywhere), Odin collared Loki and told him to do something about matters. No use Loki protesting that everyone had agreed with his idea; the blame was put fair and square on him, and he was forced to use his cunning to solve the problem. This he managed by changing his form into that of a mare and distracting the stallion, so that the walls were not quite fully rebuilt by the end of the six months. As a result of his dalliance with Svalfari, Loki bore the great horse Sleipnir, which he gave to Odin for nothing.

This tale tells us many things about Loki which crop up in other stories about him. First, there is no trace of evil in his behavior. On the contrary, he used his wits to the best advantage of Asgard. The idea appeared to be a good one, and everyone agreed to it, but poor Loki was blamed when it went wrong. And this happens when Thor's hammer is lost to Thrym, who demands Freya in exchange for its return. Then, it is Loki who devises the brilliant plot of disguising Thor as Freya, with a veil to hide his beard, so he may attend the wedding ceremony, get his hands on the hammer, and dispatch Thrym. Loki uses his cunning in the interests of Asgard more than once but, oddly enough, his ideas often look sound but don't quite work out. This suggests to me that his wisdom may not be as high as the *L&L* tome rates him.

Related to this, note Loki's generosity. Unfairly blamed when things go wrong, he nonetheless gives Sleipnir to Odin for nothing, and what a great gift that steed is! Not that this is matched by an reciprocal gift from Odin, though. Loki's generosity is shown in another tale. After he has sheared off Sif's hair while she is sleeping (surely this is not evil but just a prank), Loki is forced to make amends. Fair enough; but Loki returns not only with dwarven-crafted golden hair for Sif, but also with Odin's magical spear and ring, Thor's hammer, and Frey's magical boat! Loki's recompense so far exceeds the magnitude of his original offense that he just can't be seen as evil here.

But . . . Loki brings great evil into the world. It is he who fathers the World Serpent, the Fenrir wolf, and even Hel herself. Still, virtually nothing of value which the Norse gods possess did not come from Loki — witness the list above. What is becoming very clear is that Loki brings great evil and powerful good into the world. This is almost a definition of neutrality, and since Loki's chaotic alignment is not in doubt, it supports the suggestion that chaotic neutrality is his alignment.

Indeed, Loki's bearing of Sleipnir adds to this claim. Without getting too academic

about matters, the ability to change sex, form, and attributes completely, which Loki has, has led Norse scholars to compare him with the Trickster figure of folklore — a figure of supreme chaoticism, an unpredictable, the joker in the pack. Then again, we know that Loki is tolerated in Asgard and the other deities listen carefully to his advice. If he is evil, this seems implausible, although one can plead that his blood-brotherhood with Odin explains his residence and his cunning guarantees an audience. But Odin and Thor both frequently adventure with him, and it's clear that while they do not exactly trust him, they hardly seem to regard him as evil in the tales concerning their adventures.

Then, what of the death of Balder? Well, we do have to get a little academic here, I'm afraid. The one source which implicates Loki in Balder's death is the Prose Edda of the Norse writer Snorri Sturluson, and this account (which recounts Loki's giving the blind god Hodur the shaft of mistletooe which kills Balder) just happens to be the one which gives by far the blackest version of Loki generally. What's more, the Prose Edda contains a gross internal inconsistency; after Balder's death, Aegir holds a banquet for the gods, which Loki attends as a tolerated (if abusive, and not warmly welcomed) guest. This is incredible if he had been responsible for Balder's death; while Norse stories are often inconsistent, this seems almost ridiculous. Other accounts of Balder's death do not implicate Loki. But in any case, Balder's death shortly precedes Ragnarok, and presumably most Norse AD&D gamers are adventuring well before this time, so Loki's dubious role in Balder's death can't be used as evidence of his evil nature at such a time.

At Ragnarok, of course, Loki throws in his lot with the forces of evil. And why not? Much help he has been to Asgard and no thanks he has gained for it. His many gifts (admittedly balanced by the evils he has created) have never been reciprocated. He has been unfairly blamed for so many things which were not his fault. Why should he not be revenged? In any case, one can see Loki siding with evil because Ragnarok brings great chaos into the world. Loki is using evil as a tool to *maximize* chaos. This is completely compatible with being of chaotic neutral alignment.

This may be pushing the argument a little far, but I think the claim that Loki is a source of both good and evil things — and is therefore neutral in himself — is a reasonable one. It is plausible for a DM to use Loki as a deity here, and perhaps the *L&L* ascription of 15th-level assassin abilities to Loki doesn't do justice to his formidable thieving powers. Loki is also a deity who has some affinity with the forces of nature — particularly fire — but this is very much subordinate to his role as a cunning trickster in the legends about him. Perhaps a suitable symbol for him is the fly, since it is in this form that he steals Brisingamen from Freya (at Odin's behest) and also stings a

dwarven smith who is completing the manufacture of Mjolnir, Thor's hammer (which is why the handle is slightly shorter than Thor might wish).

To reiterate: One cannot say that Loki is definitely chaotic evil or chaotic neutral. The stories about him are not consistent enough for any final, absolutely correct judgment to be made. Just one example of this infuriating inconsistency: Loki can shapeshift into a bird, and he also possesses magical boots which (among other things) grant the power of flight. Yet in one tale, he needs to borrow Freya's falcon cloak to permit him to fly! And these tales are all told by the same author, who seems unaware of the discrepancy.

If Loki is used as a chaotic neutral deity in a campaign, it is certain that he would accept worshipers of any chaotic alignment, but his clerics might perhaps only be of chaotic neutral alignment. Loki is unlikely to be concerned about their straying-toward goodness or evil, but they would have to be unswervingly chaotic. They might be very slippery customers indeed, and I leave details of their practices to creative players. However, they should be on reasonable terms with followers of Odin and Thor, since their deity adventures readily with those other gods, though they might enjoy duping or tricking them in ways which are not directly harmful. Clerics of Loki should (if restricted to a chaotic neutral alignment, which I suggest) be tricksters, but not mali-

cious. However, it is the thief class which finds its most appropriate deity here.

#### **NIORD (god of the sea and burials)**

##### *Greater god*

ARMOR CLASS: -4  
MOVE: 18"/24"  
HIT POINTS: 355  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 (+16)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better  
*weapon to hit, and see below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%, and see  
*below*  
SIZE: L (6½')  
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*  
WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *Lawful good,*  
*lawful neutral, and those closely*  
*associated with seafaring*  
SYMBOL: *Pole star*  
P-LANE: *Gladsheim*  
CLERIC/DRUID: *18th-level cleric/*  
*12th-level druid*  
FIGHTER: *11th-level fighter*  
MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *lath-level*  
*magic-user, and see below*  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*  
MONK/BARD: *6th-level bard*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: IV  
S:24 (+6, +12) I: 24 W: 24  
D:23 C: 25 CH: 24

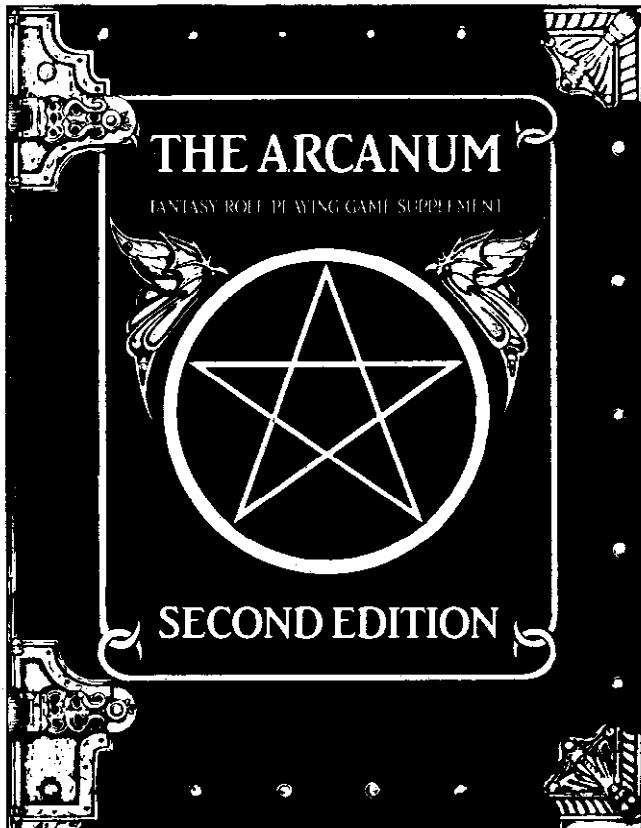
Niord uses a great *trident* +4, which combines the powers of *fish command* and *submission*, striking for 3-30 hp damage and a +16 hp bonus (+4 for the weapon and +12 for his strength).

In addition to any spells memorized by virtue of class or level abilities, and the standard divine abilities of a greater deity, Niord uses any water-based spell (such as *cone of cold*, *part water*, *transmute water to dust*, etc.) once per day at the 30th level of magic use. He is himself immune to any attacks using such spells. In addition, the deity can summon one air elemental and one earth elemental, both of vast size (24 HD), once per day to do his bidding and, if in water, can summon up to 100 HD of aquatic creatures to fight on his behalf if necessary, each day.

#### **FREY (god of peace and abundance, god of the elves)**

##### *Greater god*

ARMOR CLASS: -5  
MOVE: 18"  
HIT POINTS: 388  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20 (+16)  
*or 6-60 (+16) (see below)*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better  
*weapon to hit*



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MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%, and see below

SIZE: M (6'')

ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: Any non-evil (good alignments and druids preferred)

SYMBOL: Boar's head

PLANE: Gladsheim

CLERIC/DRUID: 16th-level cleric/23rd-level druid

FIGHTER: 17th-level ranger

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 13th-level magic-user

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: 15th-level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: IV

S:24 (+6,+12) I: 22 W: 25

D:24 C: 25 CH: 24 (25)

Frey possesses an ice-blue two-handed *sword* +4 which strikes for 2-20 points of damage (with a +16 bonus for strength and the magical plus of the weapon) or 6-60 points of damage (+16) against any true giant. Against any fire giant other than Surtur himself, any successful blow with the weapon (but only if it is being used by Frey) kills outright; there is no saving throw.

In addition to the standard abilities of a greater god and his spell use gained by virtue of class and level abilities, Frey can employ any druid spell of 5th or lower level at will, one per round, with doubled effectiveness (range, duration, number of creatures affected, etc.). Because of his powerful association with natural forces, Frey can summon one elemental of each type (fire, air, earth, and water) of vast size (24 HD) to do his bidding each day. Frey cannot be harmed by earth-based spells or the use of acids, and likewise he cannot be harmed in any manner by death magic, disintegration, energy drains, aging, or caused wounds, irrespective of how, or by whom, these attacks are effected.

## FREYA

(goddess of love, fertility, omens, and the dead)

Greater goddess

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 18"/48"

HIT POINTS: 377

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE: By weapon type (+12)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better weapon to hit, and see below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90%

SIZE: M (6')

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good

WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: Any non-lawful, non-evil being (neutral good and chaotic good preferred)

SYMBOL: Falcon

PLANE: Gladsheim

CLERIC/DRUID: 18th-level cleric/12th-level druid

FIGHTER: 7th-level ranger

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 15th-level illusionist, and see below

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: 12th-level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

S:24 (+6,+12) I: 22 W: 24

D:24 C: 23 CH: 25

Freya uses a *frost brand* +3 in battle if necessary, but prefers to rely on her magical abilities. In addition to standard divine abilities, and those gained by virtue of class or level abilities, Freya can use any fire-based or divination spell once per day at the 30th level of magic use. She can also use a superior form of *charm person* at will, once per round. No mortal human, demihuman, or humanoid of less than 8 levels/HD gains a saving throw against this effect; those of 8-15 levels/HD gain a saving throw against spells with a -4 penalty (-6 if male), and those of 16 or more levels/HD gain a saving throw with a -2 penalty (-4 if male). Freya may have up to 377 HD of charmed followers at any one time.

Freya is immune to fire-based attacks and any form of magical control, and no avian creature will attack her.

## LOKI

(god of thieves, mischief and trickery)

Greater god

ARMOR CLASS: -6

MOVE: 12"/36"

HIT POINTS: 277

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better weapon to hit, and see below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%, and see below

SIZE: M (5'')

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral

WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: Any chaotic

SYMBOL: A fly

PLANE: Gladsheim

CLERIC/DRUID: 12th-level in each, and see below

FIGHTER: 9th-level ranger

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 20th-level illusionist

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 30th-level thief

MONK/BARD: 13th-level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: IV

S:19 (+3, +7) I: 25 W: 22

D:25 C: 21 CH: 25

Loki is weak (by the standards of divine beings) and will use magical powers, avoiding physical combat if at all possible. If forced to fight, he will use an envenomed dagger +3.

In addition to spell use gained as standard divine abilities, and those obtained by virtue of class or level abilities, Loki may use any fire-based spell once per day. He uses all fire-based and illusion spells at the 20th level of magic-use. Loki can *shape-change* or use *suggestion*, at will. Loki may also use the spell *mass suggestion* three times per day at the 20th level of magic use. Magical *detection* spells and illusions, will have no chance of affecting Loki if cast by beings of 20th-level or below. Loki cannot be magically controlled in any manner.

Loki possesses a pair of magical boots which combine the powers of *water walking*, *flying*, *speed*, and *striding and springing*. He may also possess some other magical items directly relevant to his unparalleled thief abilities (ropes of *climbing*, *constriction*, etc.).

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# All about Elminster



Or, to be more precise,  
everything he's willing  
to let us know

by Ed Greenwood

*With a final, sharp, splintering sound, the door gave way. The soldiers forced it aside and peered into the dimness beyond, their blades drawn. They beheld a dark, littered room, silent and dead. Dust lay thickly everywhere. In the middle of the room, with no traces in the dust about him, an old man sat smoking a pipe, humming into his beard as he regarded them levelly.*

*"And who are you, greybeard?" demanded the foremost man-at-arms, approaching warily. In reply, the old man spoke a Word of Power that smote their ears with a clap of thunder. His challenger staggered back as if dazed, dropping blade and shield with a clangor.*

*"My name, despoilers of tombs," he said in a deep, rolling voice, "is Elminster. I sit here in the crypt to be with my friends. You will leave them, and you will leave me — NOW." And he rose, eyes flashing. The men turned and, with one accord, fled.*

*The old man chuckled, sighed, and sat down again. "You were saying?" he prompted the darkness. And the darkness answered. . . .*

Over the years, many articles have appeared in DRAGON® Magazine detailing various facets of my AD&D® game campaign, set in a world known to us as the Forgotten Realms (of which more later). I felt it was only fair to let DRAGON readers know about my source for all of this, Elminster the sage. Accordingly, you've had a few glimpses of him — and some of you have asked for more.

I should have known Elminster would cause me trouble. He is old, cantankerous, and fussy, used to being the center of attention and respect. His gruff, often sarcastic manner conceals an essential kindness and sentimentality — but he enjoys being a man of much erudition and personal mystery, telling tall tales with only a twinkle in his eye to warn of his triflings with truth. Finding out things from Elminster that he doesn't want you to know is well nigh impossible; in all the years since we first met, I've only had a handful of personal information from his lips. So, I've had to be sneaky. First, I sat and thought about what must have happened to make Elminster what he is, and to match every scrap he'd told me about events in the Realms. Then, I invited him over and got him drunk.

That head-splitting ordeal earned me (very!) few straight answers; from them, I've extrapolated yet again. Hence, what background I give here is vague as to precise places and times (largely meaningless to anyone who hasn't received a crash course in the history and geography of the Realms, anyway). It is clear that my friend has traveled widely not only in the Realms but here also, and in many other parallel worlds.

## ELMINSTER

26th-level magic-user

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good

HIT POINTS: 96

ARMOR CLASS: 10 (7 with ring)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon or spell

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: 266

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

STRENGTH: 13

INTELLIGENCE: 18

WISDOM: 18

DEXTERITY: 18

CONSTITUTION: 14

CHARISMA: 17

COMELINESS: 12

A human male of advanced age, Elminster appears to be a grey-bearded man of weathered visage, gruff voice, dancing eyes, and nondescript attire. He is a natural storyteller and mimic, and can be quite imperious or persuasive if he wants to be. He rarely travels in the Realms (although it is apparent that he once traveled there widely), preferring these days to explore other worlds. When he does travel, it is usually in the disguise afforded by a *shape change* spell, or under cover of *invisibility*; Elminster travels to acquire information; his great love is the discovery of the long-forgotten, or of creatures and magic totally new to him.

Elminster keeps a low profile in the Realms, preferring not to engage in open diplomacy or politics of any sort. Officially, he maintains a sage's neutrality; in fact, he prefers to see peace, freedom from slavery and oppression for all peoples (of all races), tolerance, and maintenance of wilderness and natural beauty. He often works with circles of druids and allied rangers, magic-users of like mind (notably Khelben "Black-staff" Arunsun; Alustriel, High Lady of Silverymoon; and The Simbul, mage-queen of Aglarond), and that mysterious group known only as the Harpers, working covertly to prevent war and limit the influence of rulers and groups viewed as evil.

Elminster has perhaps the best private library in the Realms, and hence is often consulted on matters of history and genealogy, but he is most famous as the foremost authority on rare and arcane magic, and on dangerous and unusual beasts. Elminster enjoys imparting wisdom to others, but intensely dislikes giving up the time necessary to train a magic-user up to a new level of mastery, and will not undertake such tutelage for those he is not friendly with or not beholden to. Adventurers come to him from all over the Realms, and he is said to be fabulously wealthy as a result of the fees they pay (having only to sell the right to copy a spell to certain mages, if he ever desires more wealth). He never dresses as a person of wealth or influence, however; formal or grand clothing, to Elminster, is a simple black or grey robe, clean and unadorned. Rumors of his wealth are borne

out by the fact that he aids those it pleases him to aid, and turns away others, regardless of how much or how little any of them offer in payment.

The breadth of Elminster's knowledge of beasts is displayed in the many monster descriptions of creatures unique to the Realms found in DRAGON Magazine's pages from issue #30 onward, and in the many detailed "ecologies" of monstrous creatures found on many worlds also found therein. The extent of his unrivaled knowledge of the lore of magical spells and items of the Realms can be seen in "Seven Swords" (issue #74), "Six Shields" (issue #89), and many other articles on magical items, as well as the "Pages From The Mages" series. As well as drawing on the library of spells glimpsed in the "Pages" series, Elminster has a number of powerful, unique spells he has developed to aid him in traveling about, and in acquiring information. These are described hereafter.

Elminster has been known to wear a necklace of missiles, and customarily wears a +3 ring of protection and a non-vampiric ring of regeneration. He may have ioun stones of any sort upon his person, and always carries a staff (usually nonmagical, although he does own a staff of striking). Elminster smokes a meerschaum pipe (burning some strange substance that produces thick green or blue smoke, sparks, and smoke rings), and can drink heavily without apparent ill effects.

He can be witty and clever in conversation if he so desires, or haughty or charming, or terrible and commanding. As he has grown older, Elminster has become more whimsical, given to sudden impulses and doing things "for the hell of it." He is not aggressive, but is fearless, and will fight if crossed, threatened, or attacked. He favorite spells are known to include *identify*, *magic missile*, *write*, *magic mouth*, *disintegrate*, *legend lore*, *imprisonment*, *meteor swarm*, and *shape change*; he is likely to have memorized some or all of these whenever encountered. He dislikes conjuration/summoning spells of all sorts, and prefers not to deal with creatures from the Lower Planes or the Elemental Planes (except firetails, as described in issue #61, page 48).

Elminster is likely to have memorized any or all of the following unique spells (he sometimes calls these his "little triumphs of Art") that he has developed:

### Inscribe (Evocation/Alteration)

Level: 6

Range: 7"

Duration: 1 turn +1 turn/level

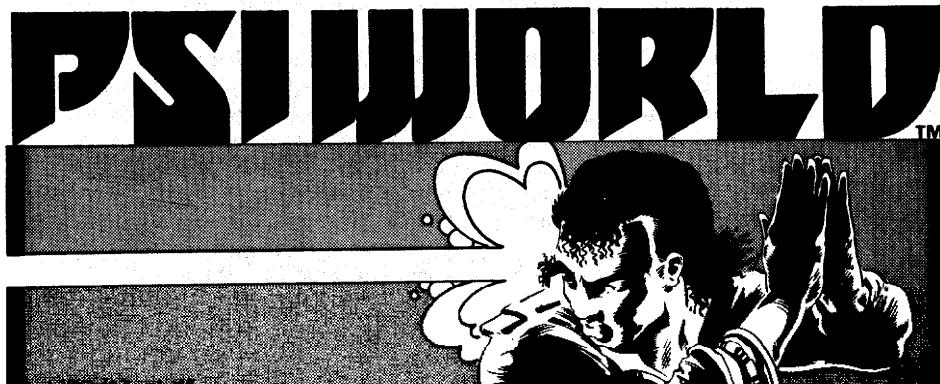
Area of Effect: One inscription

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: Special

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, a magic-user may be able to inscribe a spell he or she cannot understand at the time (due to low level, lack of time in



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which to study or write, or insufficient intelligence or training) into a spell book or onto a suitable writing surface (such as a slate or scroll). The magic-user may by means of this' spell inscribe non-magical text or markings, spells of any class or level, and magical runes or inscriptions (such as glyphs or symbols – these latter are not triggered by such inscription, but their duplicates created by this spell contain all the harmful properties of the originals, and may be triggered by subsequent examination, touching, or study). The originals copied by means of this spell are not altered or affected in any way. Due to the broad nature of magics with which this spell can cope, it is sometimes called the "Universal Pantograph" by Elminster's colleagues.

Nonmagical writings are always successfully copied by this spell (i.e., the magic-user will always make his or her saving throw). Copies are perfect counterfeits of the original, duplicating errors in the original, ink hue, and the layout and size of characters exactly. The magic-user must make a saving throw versus spells, at -4, to attempt the writing of any spell, spell ink formulas, or magical symbol, glyph, or rune, if the inscription's origin or nature is not that of magic-user or a magic-user subclass (including incantatrixes, from issue #90). If the material to be copied is not a spell but is of of magic-user or allied origin, the saving throw is made at +2 if the inscription is up to one level greater than those he or she currently uses, +0 at two levels higher, and at -1 per level from three levels higher onward.

The saving throw modifiers for the copying of spell texts are as follows: +3 for a spell of the maximum level usable by the magic-user, +4 for a spell of one level lower than the maximum, +5 for a spell of two levels lower, and so on. If this saving throw is failed, the inscription is *not* copied, and the caster is *stunned* for 1-3 rounds and suffers 1-2 hp of damage per level of spell attempted. Such damage is to both psyche and body (only 1-4 hp per day can be healed, by any means or combination of means).

The inscription created by this spell requires the presence (within a 7" spherical radius of the quill, which may itself be no farther than 1" from the original to be copied) of the caster, but not his or her concentration. He or she is *not* in a trance, and may sleep, cast other spells, study, or do anything as long as he or she does not leave the spell radius (including use of a *blink* spell or becoming astral or ethereal, or using a *rope trick*, *portable hole*, or other means to enter an extra-dimensional space) or die during the process of inscription. This process is by means of an enchanted, animated quill (which can be reused as many times as desired), a general-purpose magical spell ink formulae (cf. "Pages From The Mages," *write* ink formulas, second formulas, issue #62), and a drop of the caster's blood.

The quill will inscribe magical writings at

the rate of one turn per level of the spell attempted. Non-magical writings take 1-6 turns to inscribe, depending on volume: one turn for a one-page written inscription (up to 500 words or so), two turns if maps, diagrams, illustrations, or designs are involved (including calligraphic variations in text, illuminated letters, and the like), three turns for "chapbook" or pamphlet-sized writings, four turns for a book, and five or six turns for large tomes, atlases, multi-volume works, etc.

If at any time during the process of inscription the quill is interrupted (it will evade attempts to grab or deflect it, but can be destroyed by any attack dealing at least 4 hp damage, and is flammable) or the mage breaks the conditions described above, all of the inscribed writing will fade in 1-2 rounds and be forever lost, and the spell is wasted (the quill is not harmed, and may be reused). Inscriptions to be copied by means of an *inscribe* spell may be concealed by darkness, other text overlaid, and the like, but they cannot be magically concealed (by *invisibility* *unreadable magic*, *blur*, and the like), or the spell has no effect; prior removal of such magics is necessary.

An *erase* spell cast upon the quill will halt its work and ruin the inscription (unless it is countered by casting *dispel magic*, or an offsetting *write* spell, on the quill within two rounds of casting), but completed inscriptions made through use of an *inscribe* spell cannot be erased unless they fail to save vs. spells as though of the level of the caster of *inscribe* at the time of casting. Such inscriptions can be readily concealed by *secret page* and other magics, however.

This spell requires prior construction of a quill, which is traditionally made from the finger bone of an intelligent being who could, in life, write; electrum of the purest sort; and, ash wood or rosewood. A shaft of the desired length is fashioned of the rosewood, then riveted with electrum to the bone. Upon the bone is then cast a *Nulathoe's ninemen* spell (q.v., "Pages From The Mages," issue #62), and the bone is then affixed to a pen nib or point fashioned of electrum.

*Enchant an item* is then cast upon the pen, and within its period of efficacy *wizard eye*, *unseen servant*, and (if desired) *permanency* spells are added. The pen must then be used daily by the mage, and carried about on his or her person constantly (next to the flesh, if possible) for the period of a moon (in the Realms, as here, about a month). It is then ready for use, and may then have subsequent magics (such as *invisibility* and *Drawmij's instant summons*) cast upon it. It may be carried in a *Leomund's tiny chest* and *enlarged* or *shrunk* without harm. If not endowed with *permanency* the quill will last for only seven usages (with an *inscribe* spell, unlimited normal use as a writing implement), or 100 days, whichever comes first.

#### Elminster's Evasion (Evocation)

Level: 9

Range: 0"

Duration: *Special*

Area of Effect: *The spell caster*

Components: *V,S,M*

Casting Time: 1 turn plus associated spells

Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This is a customized version of the *contingency* spell that Elminster is quite proud of; he calls it "a good and true alternative to lichdom." Upon certain conditions, set by the caster during casting and consisting of no more than six "points" or clauses (Elminster's are: upon death, loss of control over mental faculties or physical body caused by illness, physical injury, mental damage, or attack; destruction of both upper limbs or more, of total body volume; or upon utterance by self of the command word "Thaele"), the caster's body, complete with soul or spirit (even if this has been somehow separated from the body) and all physical items worn, held, or attached to the body, is instantly snatched through a momentary (1 segment) *worldwalk* (q.v.) portal, into a particular place (chosen by the caster during the initial casting of this spell), even if that place is many planes distant, and its arrival there will trigger two previously cast spells. Such spells may be of any level, but they *must* be personally cast by the caster of the *evasion* (hence, spells not known by, or prohibited to, the caster are unavailable).

The material components of this spell are a pint of the caster's blood and a gem of not less than 5,000 gp value; the gem is powdered into the blood, and both burned in flames of magical origin. Once cast, this spell will remain in effect without renewal until the conditions are met or the caster is killed (which is usually one of the conditions). At the end of casting, the spell-caster loses 1-4 hit points; this life energy is set aside to aid the *worldwalk* when it is needed. Every 24 hours after this initial loss of hit points, a further hit point is lost. Such hit points may be regained by magical means, but the initial loss of 1-4 hit points is permanent until the spell is discharged.

In Elminster's case, the fulfillment of the conditions given above whisk his body away to an extra-dimensional "Safehold" (where he keeps his spell books), where an automaton (cf. Creature Catalog III, issue #101), *unseen servant*, or something of the sort – Elminster was deliberately vague – will administer to him an *elixir of health*, *elixir of life*, *Keoghtom's ointment*, or 1-6 potions of healing. If he does not then revive within eight turns and speaks the word "Brendar" while touching the magical servant, a *sending* spell is cast, with a message asking for help, to Elminster's friend the Simbul, mage-queen of Aglarond, who knows the location of the Safehold. I suspect, although Elminster would not confirm this, that she has a reciprocal arrangement with Elminster. Elminster would not speak at all on the subject of who, besides himself, has access to this spell or an equivalent developed by another; reports of certain events in the Realms lead me to suspect that some of the

most powerful of his allies (e.g., Khelben Arunsun) and foes (e.g., the most powerful members of "the Network" and of the Red Wizards of Thay) command similar magics. Elminster also hinted that his Safehold has one or more guardian creatures, but declined to say anything definite about the Safehold's location or defenses.

#### Worldwalk (Alteration)

Level: 9

Range: 3"

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V,S,(M)

Casting Time: 3 segments

Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, an ultra-dimensional connection is temporarily created between the plane of existence the caster is on and another, chosen by the caster. This portal, similar to a *gate*, resembles a circular, shimmering disc of force, floating on edge just above the ground up to 3" distant from the caster, located as he or she wills. The portal can be placed against solid material (such as walls), and will function normally, or may be cast in mid-air, so that it is reachable only by creatures able to levitate or fly. If a specific location is not chosen by the caster, the portal will always appear in front of the caster in the direction the latter is facing, 1" distant, so that it can easily be stepped through.

The portal will last for up to 1 turn per level of the caster, unless the latter causes it to vanish (which can be done at will), but while the portal is in existence, creatures can pass through it freely from both sides. If a portal is dispelled (by *dispel magic* or upon the will of the caster) while a creature is traversing it, that creature will be flung into the uppermost plane of Limbo. The caster need not concentrate on the portal to maintain its existence. After casting, the subsequent absence, death, or mental disability (such as unconsciousness, *feeble-mindedness*, etc.) of the caster will not affect the portal. The portal has a diameter of 2", and any creature able to pass within its confines can use it. Creatures able to assume or revert to a smaller form (such as a magic-user employing *polymorph self*) will be forced into that form by the portal's nature if (and only if) they cannot pass through it otherwise; creatures too large to pass through the portal are simply left behind; the portal has no effect on them. A creature takes 1 segment to traverse a portal (not including any time taken to approach it); thus, a maximum of ten creatures can pass through a portal in a given round (if they are lined up and ready at the beginning of the round). Missiles and other objects not borne directly by a creature will not pass through a portal; they will be deposited at random in Limbo (see above).

The plane reached by a portal may be one known to (and visualized during casting

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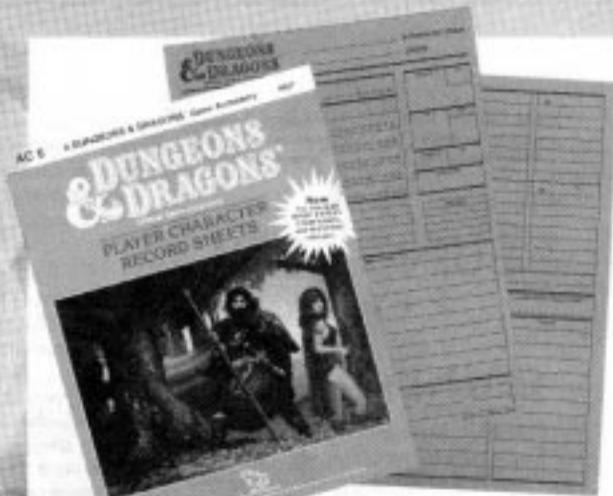
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by) the spell-caster, or an unknown plane from which the caster has solid physical material of any size (which must be touched or grasped when the spell is cast; this becomes a material component of the spell, but is not consumed, and may be carried through the portal if it will fit, without causing the portal to vanish), or at random. Note that any spell components carried by a magic-user are likely to have come from his or her own plane of existence. A portal may also be created to reach a random (unknown) plane.

There is a possibility of error in the destination reached by the portal, of 100% if the caster is of first level, 95% if of second level, and so on, decreasing by 5% per level. A wrong direction is more likely (60%) to be another (parallel) Prime Material Plane, rather than other sorts of planes of existence. A portal's destination cannot be changed, once it is created. If a *wordwalk* is cast to reach a plane merely heard of, or one fulfilling certain imagined conditions (i.e., "where magic does not work"), the destination is 10% (+1% per level of the caster) likely to be such a plane (if one exists); the destination will otherwise be at random. (In Elminster's case, many planes are initially reached via research from written records, encountered interplanar travelers, and a few by random exploration.)

As mentioned before, Elminster can employ many rare or unique spells. He has

revealed only a fraction of these to me thus far, and I have listed them below by level for the convenience of DMs (not including the three just described):

Cantrips: *Catfeet*<sup>5</sup>, *Cut*<sup>5</sup>, *Gallop*<sup>5</sup>, *Horn*<sup>5</sup>, *Listen*<sup>5</sup>, *Scorch*<sup>5</sup>, *Snatch*<sup>5</sup>, *Spark*<sup>5</sup>, *Sting*<sup>5</sup>  
 1st level: *Scatterspray*<sup>1</sup>  
 2nd level: *Agannazar's scorcher*<sup>3</sup>, *Bladethirst*<sup>5</sup>, *Dispel silence*<sup>4</sup>  
 3rd level: *Laeral's dancing dweomer*<sup>2</sup>, *Tasirin's haunted sleep*<sup>2</sup>  
 4th level: *Archveult's skybolt*<sup>2</sup>, *Bowgentle's fleeting journey*<sup>4</sup>, *Caligarde's claw*<sup>2</sup>, *Encrypt*<sup>3</sup>, *Hailcone*<sup>3</sup>, *Illykur's mantle*<sup>3</sup>, *Merald's murderous mist*<sup>5</sup>, *Nchaser's glowing globe*<sup>1</sup>, *Phase trap*<sup>3</sup>, *Presper's moonbow*<sup>3</sup>, *Secure*<sup>3</sup>, *Spenderarde's chase*<sup>2</sup>, *Thunderlance*, *Tulrun's tracer*<sup>2</sup>  
 5th level: *Flame shroud*<sup>4</sup>, *Grimwald's greymantle*<sup>3</sup>, *Nulathoe's ninemen*<sup>1</sup>, *Watchware*<sup>4</sup>  
 6th level: *Reconstruction*<sup>5</sup>  
 8th level: *Body sympathy*<sup>5</sup>, *Great shout*<sup>4</sup>, *Spell engine*<sup>5</sup>  
 9th level: *Dismind*<sup>2</sup>

1 = Pages from the Mages (I), issue #62

2 = More Pages from the Mages (II), issue #69

3 = Pages from the Mages III, issue #92

4 = Pages from the Mages IV, issue #97

5 = Pages from the Mages V, issue #100

For some reason, Elminster has not revealed any spells of the seventh level. A few

notes regarding the spells listed above: *Nulathoe's ninemen* can be used to construct "crawling claws" (issue #32), and Elminster, despite his alignment, may employ these guardians (he hints, you see). The mage in Pages IV is not "Bowgentle," but Bowgentle, and Elminster tells me that I have messed up one of the spells he told me about: *death chariot* (see below). Note that this last spell is one of many clerical and druidic prayers usable by mages; Elminster has revealed eight of these to me, as well as some previously unknown *glyphs of warding* (all printed in the "Pages" series). He may well have developed, when he is encountered, magic-user versions of these magics as spells for his own use!

The *death chariot* spell, Elminster tells me (rather testily) was my mistake; I combined what he told me of two versions of the spell — the original, written by Num "the Mad" in his book, causes the *chariot* to vanish in a 3" radius ball of fire at the end of one turn after casting regardless of the caster's wishes (although the caster may, at will, "detonate" the *chariot* earlier than that). An improved version of the prayer, devised by (or inspired by Silvanus in) Mournstarn "the Master," leader of the Circle of druids (and rangers) who once dwelt in the woods near Shadowdale, allows the druid casting a *death chariot* to ignite the chariot at any time except at the natural expiration of the spell (which is at the end of a duration of one round per level of the caster), at which time the *chariot* fades away (perhaps dumping any occupants into mid-air for a fall, but not otherwise harming them). Both versions of the prayer are of the same level. I missed Elminster's mention of Mournstarn, in the midst of his babbling; sorry, folks.

Elminster's precise age is unknown (he will give coy evasions to any questions on this topic), but he is at least six hundred winters of age — and presumably the user of *potions of longevity* and *vitality*, and perhaps also an imbiber of regular *elixir of life* doses. This count of years is inescapable, given that he once had Arkhon "the Old" as a tutor, and that he remembers the city of Myth Drannor (cf. "Into The Forgotten Realms," issue #95) in all its glory.

The "Old Sage," as he himself is now known, has taught such famous workers of magic as The Simbul, the witch Sylene (now deceased), and the bard Storm Silverhand, who remained with him for many years as apprentice and lover before making her own way in the Realms — and perhaps knows more of Elminster's past than any other living creature. Elminster now dislikes teaching in any concentrated form — he has sickened of such work, he says, by hearing too many sages, magic-users, and "scholars of the 'if I stop talking for an instant I shall cease to exist' school — and knowing how much I came to resemble them."

He is also irked by the constant demands of those who would hire his knowledge for information on magic and monsters. "War



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— it's always this or that power, this or that weapon. Kings make war unceasingly, for the greater men are, the more petty men are. . . . and no one seeks me out for the lore of real value, the lore of the land. No one wants to hear about how to get good crops, where to plant or where not to plant, or how to guard beauty in the taking of riches from rock and soil. No one wants to listen to such things, because — mark ye — swords and spells rule the Realms, not cool heads and warm hearts." The true learning of being a mage, according to Elminster, is the knowledge of when *not* to use one's powers.

Over the years, Elminster's memory has been developed to an astonishing degree; he can call to mind with crystal clarity the likenesses of creatures or things seen only once, or seen long ago. He also has the unique natural ability (from birth, origin unknown, and leading to his present career) to see magical auras — precise locations, hues, shapes, and intensities — on persons and things within 3" (even when darkness prevents his normal sight). He can even see the potential for magic-wielding (which he calls "Power") as betrayed by the unconscious mental seeking or manipulation of pathways of power between the Positive and Prime Material Planes, when he looks at creatures (cf. "More Pages From The Mages," issue #69). Elminster rarely uses his psionic abilities in combat against non-psionics; he will sometimes use his disciplines while traveling. He possesses the minor disciplines *body equilibrium*, *cell adjustment*, *object reading*, and *sensitivity to psychic impressions*, and the major disciplines *energy control* and *mind bar*.

Elminster's *magic sight* enables him to recognize illusions, and *polymorphed* or otherwise transformed objects. His vast experience with magic allows him to identify all known non-unique magic-user spells (and many illusionist, druid, and cleric magics) by the opening activity of a visible spell-caster's casting — often enabling him to counter spell effects with fast, high-level magics of his own.

Elminster's parentage is unknown. At one time, I would have unhesitatingly said that the sage was of noble birth, but I've since learned that he's visited enough courts and mixed with enough high society throughout the Realms to have the etiquette and wily wit of a chancellor.

I do know that Elminster was born somewhere in the North — probably somewhere near the great city of Waterdeep, or at least the Sword Coast. His knowledge of the lands from Mirabar south to Baldur's Gate, and east to Cormyr and the Desert, is vivid and varied when he speaks of events five hundred years ago, and the tone of his voice suggests that he is remembering things he experienced and was part of, not things he has studied in books of lore.

During this time of perhaps forty years, Elminster had a varied career adventuring (suggesting that he had no parents, or rather was parted from them early) —

having little to do with magic, it appears, save as the spoils of tomb-pillaging and delving in the lost cities of the dwarves. He was fascinated by the past, as revealed in the tombs he entered and in bardic lays and ballads heard in taverns, and was also intrigued by the magic that slumbered in scroll and item that he and his band found. He speaks of Arkhon "the Old," perhaps the foremost human sage (and a mage of note, too) in the North at the time, and I suspect that he took tutelage under Arkhon in Waterdeep, and probably also learned the rudiments of an adventuring mage's art through his contacts (the merchants and "fences" of goods from the past) in the caravan-city of Scornubel. Possible tutors in magic of the time were Myrjala "Darkeyes," the half-elfen adventuress, and the merchant-mage Lycon, called "Wolf-beard" for his appearance and manner.

Thereafter, for reasons unknown (to flee enemies, seek a change, or merely advance in training, perhaps), Elminster traveled with his caravan-comrades east via Iriaebor, to Cormyr and the still-fledgling Dalelands. There, he is known to have become a friend of elves, one of the few men allowed to travel the woods of the Elven Court without special leave. There, he also came to the school of wizardry established by the Seven Wizards, where he studied under Mentor and the mage known only as "the Masked." He stayed in Myth Drannor some twenty years, growing in lore and maturity, and when deemed ready left the city (not long before its destruction) with Alais, an elven lady, to begin an epic travel about the Realms, to learn its lands and lore.

For fifteen years he traveled, ranging more widely about the Realms than any man alive had at the time. At length, Alais took him over the sea to Evermeet, the island kingdom of the elves. There she remained, to pass away, and he returned, changed in outlook and humor, to visit one keep of learning after another, quietly scouring the libraries of the Realms — and discreetly furthering his arts under the tutelage of such mages as Torose, and Shalane of Taerloon. It is thought that at this time he mastered and completed whatever processes he thought necessary for his own longevity, for Elminster then dropped out of sight for over two hundred years, doubtless into seclusion at some haunt of his own devising, to experiment in imagery on his own, developing some of his spells and the creation of magic items. At this time, too, he is known to have tentatively explored some of the Lower Planes. When he returned to public view, in Waterdeep, he began to operate as a sage, for hire, and to take on magical apprentices. Then, as now, he retained only those he liked and thought fit: the adventuress Laeral, founder of the Nine; Allustriel, who was later to become ruler of the city of Silverymoon; the witch Sylune, who was to become the lady of Aumry, Lord of Shadowdale; and, Murask of Neverwinter.

Subsequently, Sylune's husband was

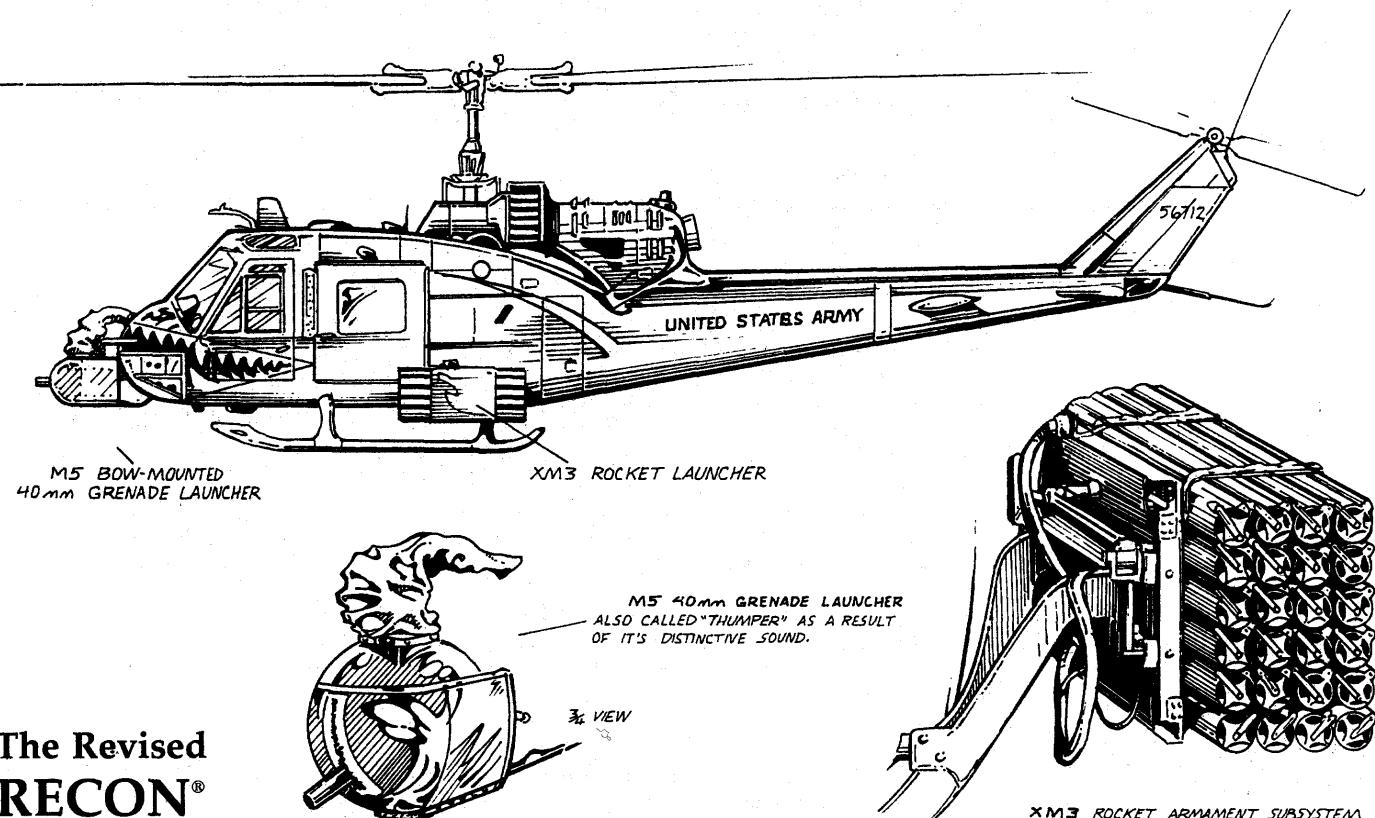
slain, and Elminster answered her call for aid by coming to Shadowdale, where he helped to overthrow an evil usurper and quell an uprising of dark elves from the depths. Elminster loved the peace and beauty of the dale, its nearness to the Elven Court, and its simple folk, and he stayed. Thereafter, he taught the bard Storm Silverhand, Sylune's sister, and aided The Simbul and Khelben Arunsun for the first time, working together against evil imagery from Thay, Mulmaster, and Zhentil Keep — foes that have remained, in one form or another, to this day. I suspect that Elminster had a hand in raising the present Lords of Waterdeep (a secretive group that includes Khelben Arunsun) to power, and in forming the Harpers, but there is nothing written anywhere of either of these groups, and Elminster will tell me *nothing* on either score; he just smiles, and winks now and then. He has often aided mages, and elves in particular, in the last forty winters or so, but has taken fewer apprentices, and less of a hand in open politics.

Presently, Elminster resides in a place he loves — the verdant farming valley of Shadow-dale. He lives quietly, respected by the townsfolk, who consult him on matters of history and genealogy, and advice on the upbringing of their sons and daughters. In a cluttered, two-story tower overlooking a fish pond, Elminster is accompanied by a scribe (see Best of DRAGON Magazine Vol. III) named Lhaeo, whose cartography is much in demand by caravan-masters and merchants. Lhaeo plays a lisping, simpering role in public so that no one will ever recognize his true identity; he is the last surviving member of a noble family who once held the crown of Tethyr, and which has been hunted to virtual extinction during the last thirty winters.

Elminster does travel more or less continuously in the "endless worlds," as he puts it, these days — and may turn up in any parallel Prime Material Plane a DM wishes, be it the Realms, the lands of Greyhawk, our Earth (*a la* "Modern Monsters" in issue #57, reprinted in Best of DRAGON Vol. V), or elsewhere. He will always be seeking magic, monsters, and — of even more importance to him — information on how each world works: its ecology, societies, and unique beauties. Rather than being a dramatic power figure, he will travel quietly, in disguise. He does present a model of a cautious, prepared mage of power — and no one should find him a pushover. When traveling, Elminster protects himself with *Serten's spell immunity* and *protection from normal missiles* as a matter of course (he is 94% likely to be so protected, whenever encountered).

Although I'm always afraid that each evening with Elminster will be my last, I suspect that he will outlive me — and may see a thousand winters or more, always learning, always traveling about. If you should meet him, please accord him the respect that is his due. After all, he *can* rout entire armies. . . .

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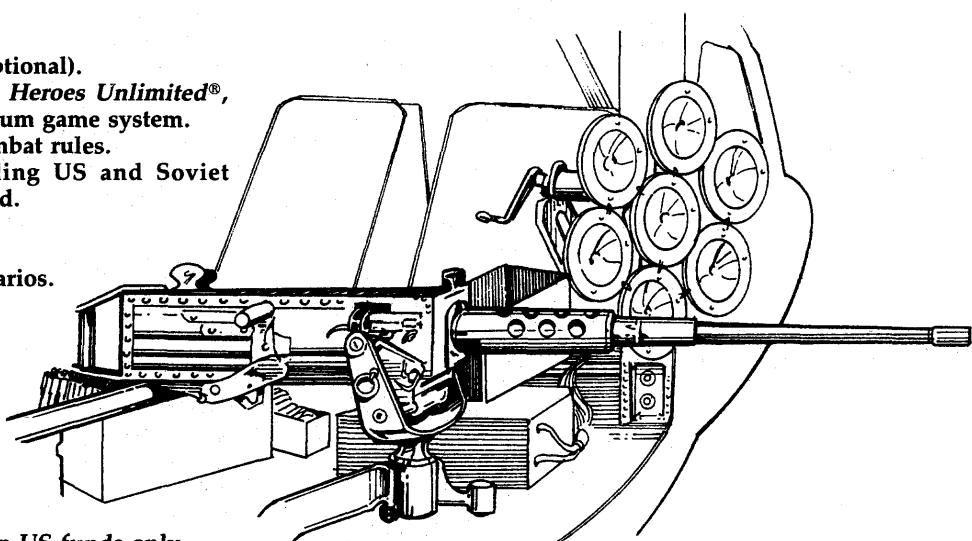
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# The role of computers

## A new column devoted to gaming with software

by Hartley and Pattie Lesser

The worlds of the fantasy role-playing gamer are fraught with encounters that require serious and lasting decisions to be made, sometimes in the wink of an eye. These choices cannot be simply thrown into an adventure without some thought given to an action's relevancy and its possible effect upon comrades and enemies alike.

Such decisions run the gamut from the soul-searching "What do I believe?" to the all-important combative question "What do I wear?" Every move, every stance a player takes for his character is looked upon and judged by the critical eyes of not only fellow adventurers, but by the ultimate authority, the gamemaster. There can be little room for incautious behavior, else the character you have taken so long to create, build, and personify can suddenly be no more than a fond memory.

There is another environment that also participates in the building and nurturing of characters, whether for the fantasy or the science-fiction genre. This is the world of the central processing unit, the main brain of the somewhat impersonal machines known as computers. Offerings of adventure game programs have become steadily more sophisticated and more numerous over the last few years. They present the game-player with a wide variety of adventuring environments filled with excitement and danger. The coding of these programs is transparent to the user, allowing the player to experience each adventure to its utmost through exciting graphic presentations on the monitor screen, sound effects, and sometimes even artificial intelligence. A large selection of adventure and fantasy games that would impress even a seasoned "paper and pencil" gamer are now available for most of the popular home computer systems.

We plan to cover some of these programs in this column, not simply in our capacity as computerphiles, but as FRP gamers ourselves. There is a great deal of difference between paying around \$8 for a game module or, say, \$20 for a new boxed game and laying out \$39 to \$59 for a computer game. As with all things, some computer games are worth the price, and others are not — but because the price of software is relatively high, the purchase represents more of a gamble. In this column, we'll try to shift the odds more in your favor by reviewing those offerings that we feel gamers would most enjoy and feel most comfortable with in the total game/computer environment. We'll also clue you in about soon-to-be-released game software that, at first view, seems to offer extraordinary dollar value and entertainment potential to the user.

The next time you're itching to do some game-playing, but your regular group can't get itself together or you're in the mood for something besides dice-rolling, think about a computer game as an alternative — at least, as an occasional change of pace. If you own or have access to a home computer and you haven't already investigated what's available in the computer-game marketplace, you may be surprised at the all-encompassing environment that most game software offers, and the sense of total involvement you can achieve without having to rely on the presence and cooperation of other human beings. Two outcomes are possible, both of them beneficial: Perhaps you'll gain a stronger appreciation for the interaction between people that is fundamental to the nature of non-computer adventure games, and perhaps you'll also enjoy the realization that computer software allows you to indulge your desire to play games any time you want, without having to assemble a group of other folks.

Any computer game belongs to one (or more) of a number of

categories, but essentially there are only two types of offerings. The first is known as an interactive text adventure. This type of game requires the player to type text into the computer that instructs the program as to what you want it to accomplish. The ability of the computer to understand what it is told depends on the complexity of the parser built into the program. The parser, basically, determines the extent of the vocabulary you can use. Each word or set of characters that the user inputs is interpreted by the program (if possible), and a set of coded responses to that set of characters is then relayed to the user via the monitor screen.

Interactive text adventures come both with and without on-screen graphics displays. Some parsers are simple, allowing only two-word commands such as "go north" or "get dagger." Others are more complex, such as those in the adventures made by Infocom. A very smart parser can recognize complete sentences that may include several different activities. A set of commands such as "go north and pick up the shovel, dig into the grave, scream, and run for your life" could all be recognized as a single input by a game having a complex parser. Generally, the most complex parsers are found in games (such as Infocom's) where the events of the adventure are described entirely in text. If a game includes a parser and some sort of graphics display, the parser must be relatively simple because a certain share of the computer's memory must be used to store and manipulate the graphics components.

The second type of game is an adventure game that normally features a full, on-screen graphics display. The player is represented on the screen by a picture or an icon (symbol), and movement throughout, within, about, and over the on-screen graphics environment is accomplished through the use of an input/output (I/O) device, usually the computer keyboard, a joystick, or a mouse. In presentation, the graphic adventure game can be quite simple or enormously complex.

Either type of game usually requires the player to map each move, so that traps, puzzles, treasure, and other features of the environment can be quickly and easily found again should the current game end suddenly. Just as in a non-computer FRP experience, the life of a low-level character can often come to an abrupt and disastrous end in either type of computer adventure.

In most instances, the programmer of the software has built a "save" feature into the game. You can close your books, pack up your character sheets, and put your dice back in the bag at the end of an FRP playing session and then pick up where you left off at a later date. In similar fashion, the player of a computer game can pause every now and then and save the game in progress. All of the character's statistics and the current positioning and status of other elements are written to a disk, where they remain etched until the player erases the saved-game file or until another save request overwrites the earlier game in progress. This comes in handy because you don't have to complete the entire adventure in one sitting (indeed, it would be practically impossible to do this with any of the larger and more complex adventures available), and because you can in effect back up in time. When your character is hovering on the edge of death because of a surprise attack by a gang of monsters, you can simply ask for the last saved position to be re-loaded and then resume playing from that position. There's no need to start the game over entirely from scratch — in most cases, that is. Some offerings do not allow for the saving of a game in progress, which can be rather frustrating.

The featured review in this column is an offering from Sir-Tech Software entitled *Wizardry*. Ahhh, you say you've heard of this game before, and it's not a new program! Well, yes and no. This particular version is a new offering, known by its players as *MacWizardry* because it happens to be written for the graphic environment of Apple's Macintosh computer. And what a difference a Macintosh can make!

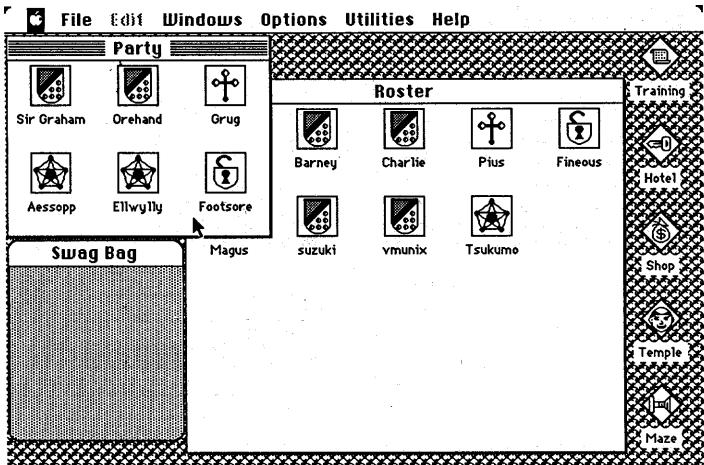
Back in 1981, a then-unknown software company released "A Game of Fantasy & Adventure" — a game called *Wizardry*. For the first time, a true fantasy role-playing simulation had been brought to a microcomputer (the Apple II). The first scenario, *Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord*, was a smash hit, outselling all other computer games at the time of its release. Major computer publications devoted page after page to not only reviews of the product, but also lively discussions of the game's effect upon the player and upon society. Clubs were formed, some of them international in scope, to aid players in "beating" the program. Playing aids surfaced, including maps of the environment and programs that offered to "resurrect" deceased characters and point the way to intriguing treasures. Pamphlets dealing with all manner of adventuring issues became available, advertised heavily in the classified sections of many widely circulated computer magazines. Much that was good and innovative in Pascal programming was invented by Andrew Greenberg and Robert Woodhead for *Wizardry*, and their perseverance in exploring this formerly uncharted domain paid off.

"Proving Grounds" was followed by two more scenarios, the last release being *Legacy of Llylgamyn* in 1983. Rumors abounded that a fourth scenario would be released in 1984 and then again in 1985, but that never came to fruition. Instead, the folks at Sir-Tech witnessed the debut of the Macintosh computer, and they realized it as a great new environment in which to work their wonders.

We played — no, lived — through each *Wizardry* scenario when it was released, and although a lack of time has prevented us from returning to complete the last two scenarios, we recall with pleasure our involvement in their environs.

Then, when we recently booted the Macintosh version of the first scenario, it was like greeting a close friend we hadn't seen in years. The scenario still retains the characteristics that gave birth to a special software-player relationship in the first place — and now there was something new and special added to those qualities. The game has matured in both its graphic presentation and its interface with the player, and with this programming improvement comes an even stronger feeling of kinship between player and program.

The premise of the original scenario is intact. The Mad Overlord, Trebor, is set on world domination, although his plans have been hampered somewhat because Werdna, the Evil Magician, has stolen his Magic Amulet. Werdna has hidden this powerful object somewhere in a Maze not far from Trebor's castle. And the sly Trebor, also realizing his need to recruit powerful members into his Elite Guard to force his rule upon the known world, has decided to use this Maze as a Proving Ground for such characters.



Screen 1

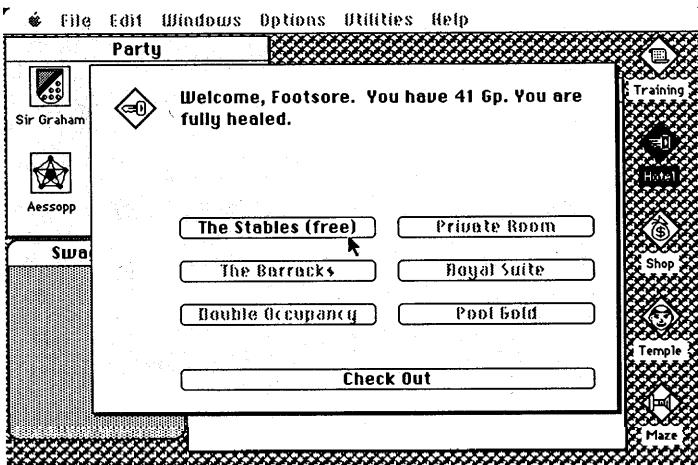
Starting with the Training Ground (where characters are "born") and proceeding to and through the Adventurers Inn, Boltac's Trading Post, the Temple of Cant, and the Maze itself, you control the destinies of six characters. The Maze is an underground labyrinth filled with dangerous encounters, riches beyond belief, and startling discoveries. By employing patience, skill, and superior cartographic skills, you can champion the cause and recover the Amulet, and thereby win this scenario.

The differences between MacWizardry and the original offering rest in the graphic and player-interface capabilities of the Macintosh computer. In the first instance, the Macintosh's 9-inch screen presents a bit-mapped graphic resolution of 512 by 342 pixels. A pixel is a single picture element, or one single dot. The higher the number of pixels on the screen (and the Macintosh screen has a large number), the greater the resolution. Granted, there's no color on the Mac screen, but with black and white and all the varying shades of gray possible, many users prefer the high-resolution display to one of lower resolution with color.

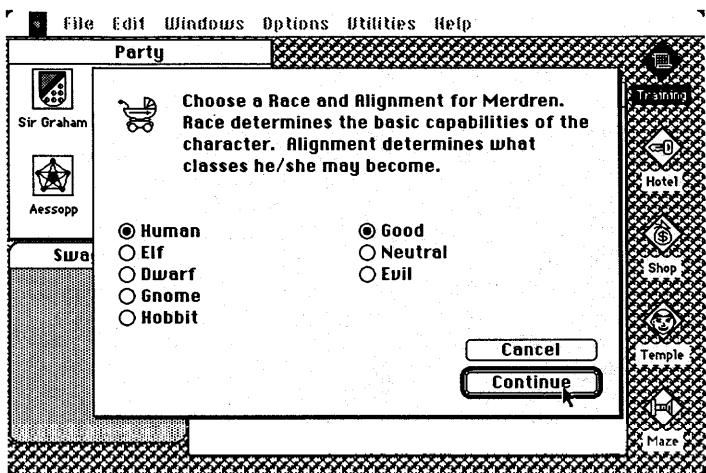
In the second instance, the interface is (in most circumstances) a mouse — an external device that projects its screen position through user movement of the mouse across a tabletop. Move the mouse to the right, and the on-screen cursor moves right. The mouse is used to position the cursor where the player wants it to be, and the mouse button is depressed to order something to be done. The user depresses the mouse button to "click on" a graphic icon to activate its environment. Normally, a single click selects an icon, and a double click "opens" an icon. A selected "something" can be moved around on the screen, while an "opened" icon usually runs a part of the program. For those who just can't get the hang of the mouse, the program will also accept inputs from the keyboard.

Add to these benefits and conveniences the fact that the game is automatically saved every three minutes, and you have a truly addicting adventure. This can be said even for those who have adventured with the original version and bested the scenario. Although you'll probably still remember portions of the Maze, put away those old maps and hint books and play it from scratch — it's worth the effort.

With *MacWizardry*, you are initially presented with a desktop (see Screen 1) that consists of the Roster, Party, and Swag Bag windows. The Swag Bag window is where items found and retrieved by characters are deposited for temporary safekeeping, and is also utilized to list items to be traded and/or identified when so ordered by that item's possessor. In the Roster window, each created character is represented by an icon. Those of priestly ilk are depicted by a cross, those with magical abilities are shown as pentagrams, fighters as shields, and thieves as picked locks. Advanced characters such as samurai fighters, bishops, and ninjas are represented by their own distinctive icons. To "activate" a character from the Roster window and have that figure join the expedition, you simply click the mouse once while the cursor is on the representative icon. This action causes the icon to be selected, and it is displayed in reverse video



Screen 2

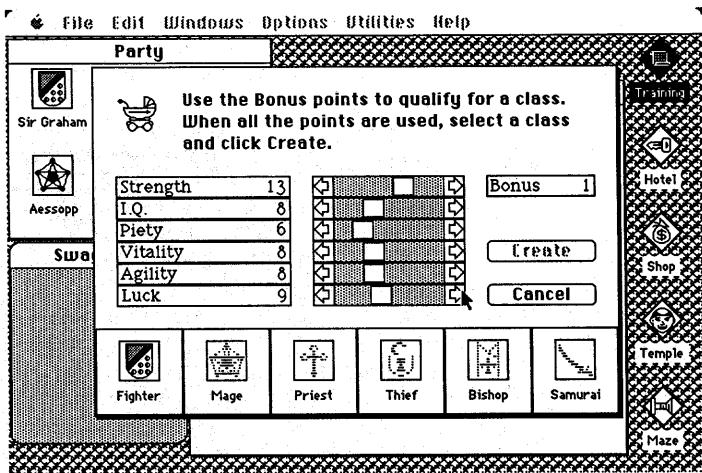


Screen 3

(black on white). You drag that icon to the Party window, found in the upper left portion of the screen. Once six adventurers have been chosen and moved to the Party window, any of the five environment icons on the right side of the screen may be double-clicked open and activated. These icons include Training, Hotel, Shop, Temple, and Maze. When one of these icons is activated, each member of your band of adventurers is paraded through the environment of that icon, which opens before you in another window (see Screen 2).

Six preconstructed characters, each of third or fourth level, are provided with the program. However, we suggest you start from scratch and proceed to the Training Grounds. An initial dialog box opens, requesting you to name the character. (A dialog box is simply a small window that usually requests the user to do something. In this case, you simply type in the name of the character to be created.) If you're making a new character, the computer starts the process of defining your character via another window. By clicking in the appropriate blank bullet, you can select from the races of human, elf, dwarf, gnome, and hobbit, and the alignments of good, neutral, and evil (see Screen 3). When you decide to continue, the character creation moves on to the distribution of bonus points given to your character (based on its race), with which its scores for Strength, I.Q., Piety, Vitality, Agility, and Luck may be individually increased. Scroll bars for each statistic allow you to raise or lower the points assigned to that statistic until all of the bonus points are depleted (see screen 4). You'll note that as these bonus-points are assigned, icons representing differing classes beneath the scroll bars turn dark when a character has been assigned enough points to gain membership to that particular career path. Click on the class you want to select, and your new character is ready to begin.

Of particular note is Boltac's Store, where a window opens to reveal what worldly goods your character possesses (those he or she is equipped with are marked with an E), how much gold your char-

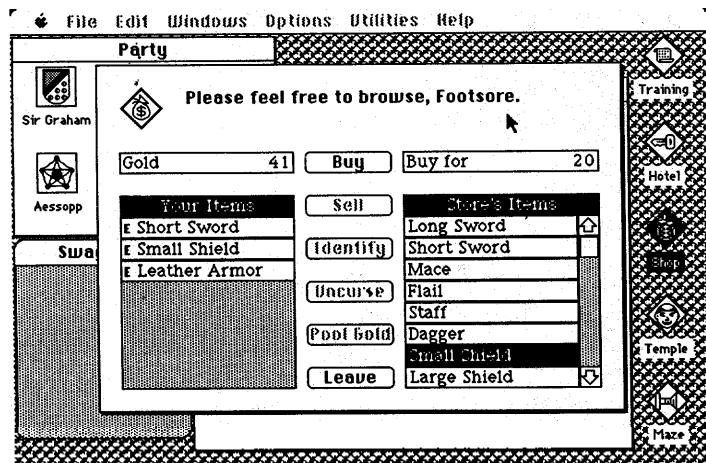


Screen 4

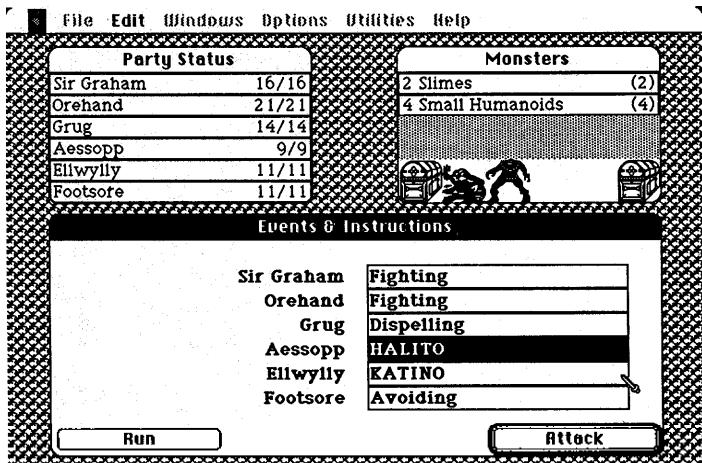
acter has, and a listing of the store's items available for sale (see Screen 5). This is an extensive list, so a vertical scroll bar is offered to facilitate viewing of all the items. Six dialog buttons provide you with different opportunities: Buy an item for sale (when clicked, the price of the highlighted item you wish to purchase is revealed); Sell (indicates the price Boltac will pay for an item highlighted in your character's possession list); Identify (for an item of unknown nature recovered in the Maze); Uncurse (if you picked up something in the Maze that you should have left alone); Pool Gold; and Leave.

The "Pool Gold" option is new to this version of *Wizardry*, and it's very handy indeed. This action allows one character to collect the gold of all characters to make possible the purchase of higher-priced items. You'll probably visit Boltac's place several times during the course of the adventure to buy the weaponry, armor, potions, and magic items that are quite necessary to the character's ultimate success.

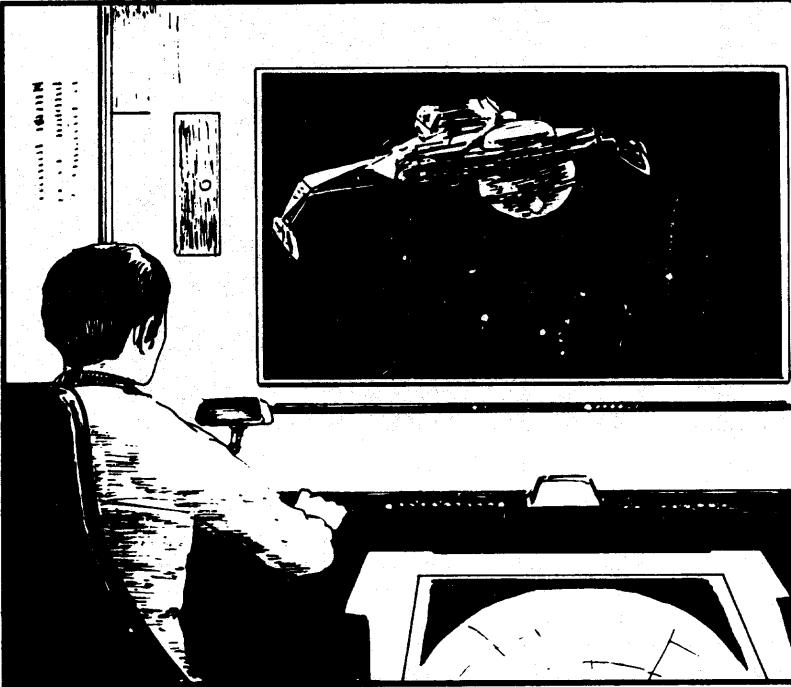
But, of course, the only way you can buy something is if you can afford it, and the only way to accumulate gold is through the defeat of adversaries in the Maze. The adversaries are not easy conquests, especially for characters at lower levels of experience. (Screen 6 shows what a typical encounter for your band of adventurers would look like.) If your band is victorious, on some occasions a locked treasure chest might also be found. More often than not, the chest will be booby-trapped. Each member of your party offers an opinion, via a dialog window, of what the offensive trap might be (see Screen 7). Some characters' opinions are far more valuable than others', and as such are displayed in boldface print. Despite some failures (a couple of them quite critical, as a matter of fact), we have found the thief to be most accurate in defining the trap type, as might be expected. To get at the gold, click on the name of the character you want to open the chest, and then click on the trap type you feel represents the concealed danger. If you're correct, the chest can



Screen 5



Screen 6

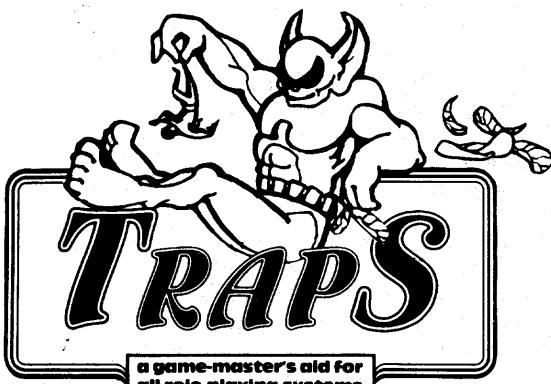


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— Grimtooth

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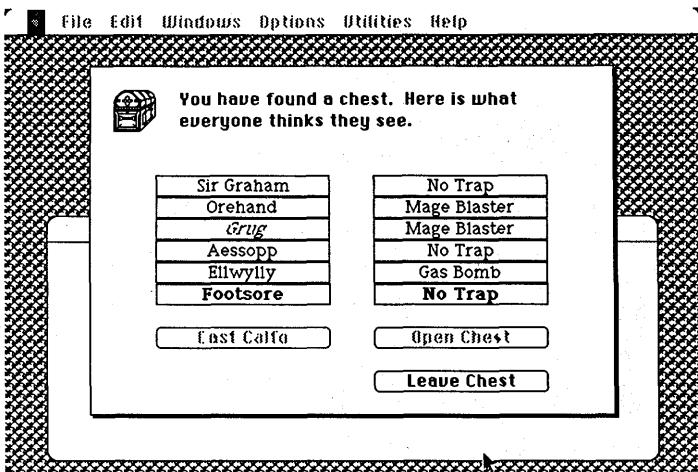
These figures may also be used with any fantasy RPG.

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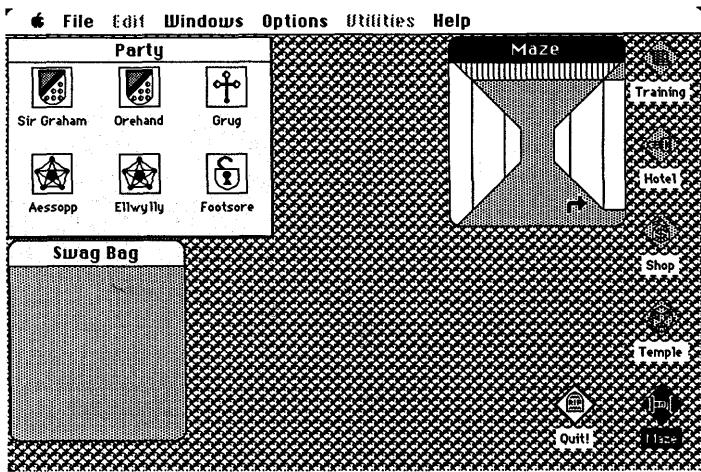
Screen 7

be opened without difficulty. If you're wrong . . . well, you could be dead wrong! Our experience has shown that it's wisest to select a character with a fairly high Agility score and an above-average number of hit points to manage the opening of the chest.

The graphic representation of the Maze is displayed in a small window that may be enlarged via the program's Options Menu (see Screens 8 and 9, before and after). This menu also allows the player to dump a Swag Bag (the third window normally displayed in the lower right-hand corner of the screen), save the party and the game in its current condition, mark the party's location (which truly aids in Maze mapping), or disband the party and divvy up the accumulated gold. The Options Menu also allows the player to set the delay time for on-screen messages, from none to the use of a Continue button that must be clicked for play to proceed after being halted for some message.

A Utilities menu allows you to restart a party, a truly unique addition to *Wizardry*. This affords you the chance to halt play during an adventure (unheard of before) in the Maze. For those who played the original *Wizardry*, recall the frustration and time you spent simply trying to get out of the dungeon to save your character's status before turning off the computer so you could attend to dinner! Now you can delve back into the adventure at any time. All you have to do is enter the name of one of the party members who was left in the dungeon when you quit the saved game and zip . . . you're there, back in the Maze. The other adventurers will be close by and also ready to continue. In this menu you can also rename characters and, when your characters have reached 7th level status, you can also design their own insignias. Another nice touch.

The special disciplines of "Iconology" and "Windowology" play important roles in the success of this adventure. At any time, you may display your character's statistics (all at once, singularly, or sequentially) via windows (see Screen 9). When you're in the Maze,

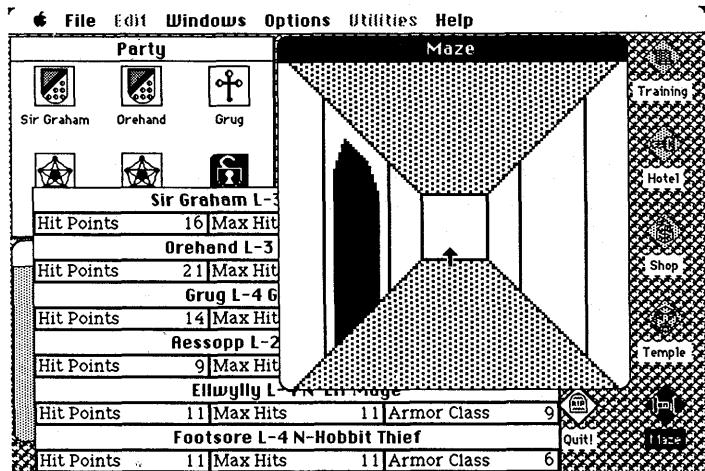


Screen 8

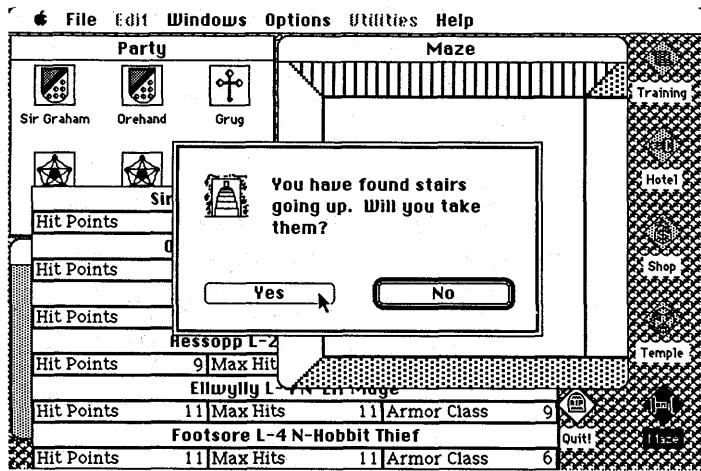
these information-packed windows can be automatically arranged at the bottom of the screen to show only the top line of information, which includes critical facts such as the character's current number of hit points, the maximum number of hits he or she can take, and the character's armor class. By clicking on any one of these windows, it becomes selected, and all of those character's statistics are immediately available for review.

Buttons within the character window allow you to select specific information. "Items" displays all equipment that the character possesses, with those items he or she is equipped with marked with an E. When "Mage Spells" or "Priest Spells" is clicked, a listing of the character's known spells is displayed. By pressing "+" or "-", the spells available for each experience level are revealed, and those that the character knows and can cast are highlighted. "Honors Earned" displays those accomplishments of a character worth knowing about. "Next Level" moves the character up in level and also displays each level of spells for the selected character. From this window, you can also "Give" or "Take" items (to or from the Swag Bag), as well as "Equip" or "Unequip," which change the items a character is carrying. The latter is rather a good choice if one of your rogue's possessions happens to be cursed. If your character is a bishop, he or she can also attempt to "Identify" an unknown item that has been found. You can also "Cast Spell" if the character has that particular capability, or "Pool Gold" for an accounting of one's bank balance.

All of this information is necessary if one is to hold sway over the hoodlums, nasty things, and other evildoers encountered in the Maze. When your brave band encounters something to be contended with, the onscreen cursor suddenly changes into a sword and three new windows are displayed (see Screen 6). And, in the immortal words of Monty Python's Flying Circus, "Now for something completely different . . ." A window in the upper left corner of the



Screen 9



Screen 10

screen, entitled Party Status, informs you of each character's current and maximum hit-point totals. Should the former numerical value start to decrease rapidly, due to a somewhat awkward and less than victorious confrontation, you'd better quickly come to the realization that your character is close to becoming a fatality.

A window in the upper right corner of the screen reveals the Monsters encountered, how many, their names, and a graphic representation of the enemies. Should these cretins possess a treasure chest, that is also shown in the window. A larger window at center screen, entitled Events & Instructions, is the place where each of your adventurers chooses what to do to counter the attacking hordes. One overall choice for the party is to Run (sometimes a mighty fine idea), the other is to Attack. If you make the latter selection, each character in your party may participate in the ensuing battle by Avoiding or Fighting. Those who are able to Dispel may attempt to negate those hostiles of the undead variety. Spell possessors can cast magics they feel might be appropriate.

Movement within the Maze is accomplished by moving the cursor (via your mouse or keyboard commands) in the direction you wish the group to travel. The cursor is displayed as an arrow (see Screens 8 and 9), and will either point straight ahead or to the right or left. When your direction is set, simply click the mouse button and your band of adventurers will move one square in that direction. You may be forgiven for breathing an audible sigh of relief when you encounter the dialog box shown in Screen 10; this is a sign that safety is just a step or two ahead . . . if you're on the first level of the Maze, that is.

Another new feature of the Macintosh version makes the process of backing up characters much more simple for the user than it was in the original version. After your group has left the Maze, you simply move each character from the Party window back to the Roster window and request "Backup characters" from the File menu. You are asked to name your backup file, at which point all 20 characters are saved to disk with their current statistics. The designation of a unique file name means that other players using the same game disk can also back up 20 different characters, with only the limits of your storage medium restricting the total number of backup files available. Backed-up characters are simply restored back to the Roster via the same menu, and character sheets containing all of the adventurers' information can be generated on a printer.

*MacWizardry* is a delightful reintroduction of a marvelous classic and could well become one in its own right. The Macintosh is the perfect avenue for introduction of this fantasy adventure to the many who have never had the opportunity to participate in previous *Wizardry* offerings. We could highly recommend *Wizardry* for the Macintosh, but we won't — we'll rave about it! Try this one on your Mac and enter more than a game — enter a realm where adventure reigns supreme.

*The Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord* is available for both the Macintosh and the IBM personal computers, priced at \$59.95 for either version. The Apple II version of the same program retails for \$49.95. The second and third *Wizardry* scenarios are so far only available for the Apple II; *Knight of Diamonds* is priced at \$34.95 and *Legacy of Llylgamyn* at \$39.95. If you're having trouble finding the one you want, contact Sir-Tech Software, 6 Main Street, Ogdensburg NY 13669 (phone 315-393-6633) for information.

To close this first column, here's our initial list of recommended entertainment software, listed alphabetically by title, as well as some quick looks at products planned for release soon (as of this writing). Look for many of these games to be the subjects of feature reviews in the months to come.

*Alter Ego* (Activision, Inc.) — A role-playing game wherein you build your character from birth, through each stage of human development.

*AutoDuel* (Origin Systems, Inc., distributed by Electronic Arts) — For those who have already enjoyed Steve Jackson's *Car Wars* game, here is the software translation. For the Apple II and Commodore 64.

*Balance of Power* (Mindscape, Inc.) — A superb game of global strategy that goes beyond other games, wherein thoughtful, calculated geopolitics could prevent a worldwide nuclear war! For the Macintosh.

*Enchanted Scepters* (Silicon Beach Software) — An interactive medieval adventure with recorded sound effects on disk. For the Macintosh.

*Phantasie II* (Strategic Simulations Inc.) — The sequel to SSI's best-selling *Phantasie* game. You and your party must sail to the Isle of Ferronrah and tangle with the evil lord Nikademus in an attempt to destroy his enchanted Orb and free the land from calamity. For the Apple II family, Apple III, and Commodore 64.

*Rings of Zilfin* (Strategic Simulations Inc.) — SSI calls this a new approach to fantasy role-playing adventures, using a new kind of windowing animation. Your task is to find the two missing Rings of Zilfin and fight the evil forces of Lord Dragos. For the Apple II, Apple III, and Commodore 64.

*The Bard's Tale* (Electronic Arts) — A complete adventuring environment in which your character leads a party in the quest to save the city of Skara Brae. For the Apple II and Commodore 64.

*Ultima IV* (Origin Systems, Inc.) — The most impressive and complex adventure to date; a total adventuring environment that takes place across an entire continent. For the Apple II and Commodore 64.

*Wizard's Crown* (Strategic Simulations Inc.) — A game where you can create more characters than ever — characters that move singly or collectively in this strongly plotted fantasy adventure game for intermediate-level players. For the Apple II family, Apple III, and Commodore 64.

Thanks for joining us for this first column, and we hope you come back for more. (Editor's note: This column will appear bimonthly for now, and will increase to monthly publication if reader demand indicates that would be a good idea.) Write to us in care of DRAGON® Magazine, PO. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147 if there's a game or a topic you'd like to see covered, and we'll do our best to give you what you want.

II

## The first decade

(From page 3)

this magazine out of habit, or because those of us who produce it are really nice people. (We are, but that's not the point.)

My personal goal for the next ten years, or however long I keep doing this, is to keep you buying this magazine because it's something you want. I don't really expect you to buy it for any other reason, but if we lose sight of that goal, we run the risk of taking you for granted — and as soon as that happens, we've lost you.

It isn't going to be easy. As time goes on, you're going to find more and more ways to spend your time and your money. And our obligation, to ourselves and to you, is to come up with one magazine every month that will interest you, perhaps even excite you, and make you anticipate what we'll come up with next month.

To those of you who have been with us for ten years, or any sizable portion of that time, I give my thanks. Without you, we might not be going on eleven. To those of you who have discovered us in the relatively recent past, I give my congratulations on your extremely good taste. And to all of you who are reading this, I express my hope that you'll keep reading in the months and years to come — and my promise that we'll do whatever we can to turn that hope into reality.



# Dragon Damage revisited

## Finishing the figures for physical attacks by Leonard Carpenter

In "Dragon damage revised," in DRAGON® issue #98, I suggested altering the damage that dragons inflict with their claws and fangs. For a given type of dragon, the revised damage done with the dragon's claw and bite attacks would improve with increasing size and age, just as a dragon's breath-weapon attack improves. The article described a new system for determining the claw and bite damage done by the dragons in the *Monster Manual*.

In this follow-up article, the same system is now applied to the damage done by the dragons of *Monster Manual II*, the FIEND FOLIO® Tome, and Oriental Adventures. Also presented are some suggested damage revisions for the marvelous neutral dragons created by Arthur W. Collins, which ap-

peared in DRAGON issue #37 and Best of DRAGON Magazine, Vol. III.

In "Dragon damage revised," it was argued that for any species of dragon, the claw/claw/bite routine of attacks should inflict damage that gradually increases as the dragon's power increases. A huge red dragon should do more damage with claw and fang than a small red dragon. An ancient red dragon's claws and teeth should be deadlier than those of a very young red dragon. Dragons that are larger, older, and thus more powerful should do greater damage with all attack forms, not only with their breath weapon.

The tables below illustrate the revised damage system for dragons. Each type of dragon is divided into three columns of

increasing size: small, average, and huge. The eight growth stages of a dragon's life are grouped into the following three age categories:

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| A | very young to sub-adult |
| B | young adult to old      |
| C | very old to ancient     |

Once the age category and size of a given dragon are known, consult the appropriate table to find the revised claw/claw/bite damage routine.

The official damage values listed for each species of dragon are used as the "centers" of this system. From the official damage values, all other values are extrapolated outward in all directions on the tables.

(Text concluded on page 95)

Table I: *Monster Manual II* dragons

| Small                 | Average             | Huge                |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Cloud Dragon          |                     |                     |
| A 1-8/1-8/2-20/2-8    | 1-10/1-10/2-24/3-10 | 1-12/1-12/3-30/3-12 |
| B 1-10/1-10/3-30/3-10 | 1-12/1-12/3-36/3-12 | 3-14/3-14/4-40/4-16 |
| C 1-12/1-12/3-36/3-12 | 3-14/3-14/6-42/4-16 | 3-18/3-18/4-48/5-20 |
| Mist Dragon           |                     |                     |
| A 1-3/1-3/2-12/1-6    | 1-4/1-4/2-16/2-7    | 1-6/1-6/2-20/2-8    |
| B 1-4/1-4/2-20/2-7    | 1-6/1-6/2-24/2-8    | 1-8/1-8/3-30/3-10   |
| C 1-6/1-6/2-24/2-8    | 1-8/1-8/3-30/3-10   | 2-12/2-12/3-36/4-14 |
| Shadow Dragon         |                     |                     |
| A 1-4/1-4/2-8         | 2-5/2-5/2-9         | 2-7/2-7/3-10        |
| B 2-5/2-5/3-10        | 2-7/2-7/3-12        | 2-9/2-9/4-16        |
| C 2-7/2-7/3-12        | 2-9/2-9/4-16        | 3-12/3-12/5-20      |

Table II: Oriental Dragons

| Small                  | Average           | Huge                |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Li Lung (Earth)        |                   |                     |
| A 1-6/1-6/1-10         | 1-8/1-8/1-12      | 1-10/1-10/2-16      |
| B 2-8/2-8/2-16         | 3-10/3-10/2-20    | 3-12/3-12/2-24      |
| C 3-10/3-10/2-20       | 3-12/3-12/2-24    | 4-16/4-16/3-30      |
| Lung Wang (Sea)        |                   |                     |
| A 1-8/1-8/3-18         | 1-10/1-10/4-24    | 1-12/1-12/5-30      |
| B 1-10/1-10/5-30       | 2-12/2-12/6-36    | 3-14/3-14/7-42      |
| C 2-12/2-12/6-36       | 3-14/3-14/7-42    | 3-18/3-18/8-48      |
| Pan Lung (Coiled)      |                   |                     |
| A 1-3/1-3/1-8          | 1-3/1-3/1-10      | 1-4/1-4/2-12        |
| B 1-3/1-3/2-12         | 1-4/1-4/2-16      | 1-6/1-6/2-20        |
| C 1-4/1-4/2-16         | 1-6/1-6/2-20      | 1-8/1-8/2-24        |
| Shen Lung (Spirit)     |                   |                     |
| A 1-3/1-3/2-12/1-6     | 1-4/1-4/2-16/1-6  | 1-6/1-6/2-20/1-8    |
| B 1-4/1-4/2-20/2-7     | 1-6/1-6/2-24/1-8  | 1-8/1-8/3-30/1-10   |
| C 1-6/1-6/2-24/2-8     | 1-8/1-8/3-30/1-10 | 1-12/1-12/3-36/2-12 |
| T'ien Lung (Celestial) |                   |                     |
| A 1-4/1-4/2-24         | 1-6/1-6/3-30      | 1-8/1-8/3-36        |
| B 1-6/1-6/3-36         | 1-8/1-8/4-40      | 1-10/1-10/4-48      |
| C 1-8/1-8/4-40         | 1-10/1-10/4-48    | 2-12/2-12/7-56      |

|                       |                |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Yu Lung (Carp)        |                |                |
| A 1-3/1-3/1-8         | 1-4/1-4/1-10   | 1-6/1-6/2-12   |
| B 1-4/1-4/2-12        | 1-6/1-6/2-16   | 1-8/1-8/2-20   |
| C 1-6/1-6/2-16        | 1-8/1-8/2-20   | 1-10/1-10/2-24 |
| Chiang Lung (River)   |                |                |
| A 1-4/1-4/2-20        | 1-6/1-6/2-24   | 1-8/1-8/3-30   |
| B 1-6/1-6/3-30        | 1-8/1-8/3-36   | 1-10/1-10/5-40 |
| C 1-8/1-8/3-36        | 1-10/1-10/7-42 | 1-12/1-12/6-48 |
| Tun Mi Lung (Typhoon) |                |                |
| A 1-3/1-3/1-12        | 1-3/1-3/2-16   | 1-4/1-4/3-18   |
| B 1-3/1-3/2-16        | 1-4/1-4/2-20   | 1-6/1-6/3-24   |
| C 1-4/1-4/2-20        | 1-6/1-6/2-24   | 1-8/1-8/3-30   |

Table III: Neutral Dragons

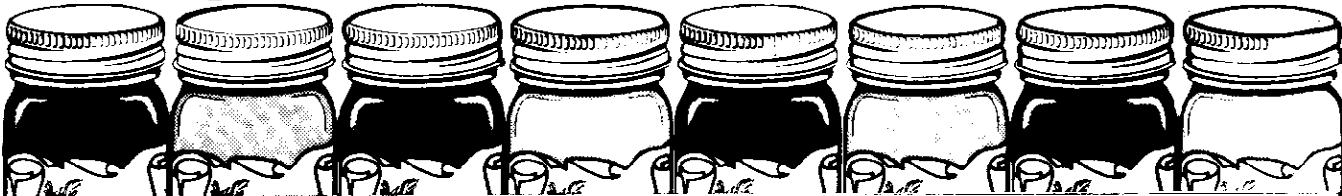
| Small           | Average        | Huge           |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Crystal Dragon  |                |                |
| A 1-3/1-3/1-6   | 1-3/1-3/1-8    | 1-4/1-4/1-10   |
| B 1-3/1-3/1-10  | 1-4/1-4/2-12   | 1-6/1-6/2-16   |
| C 1-4/1-4/2-12  | 1-6/1-6/2-16   | 1-8/1-8/2-20   |
| Topaz Dragon    |                |                |
| A 1-3/1-3/1-8   | 1-4/1-4/1-10   | 2-5/2-5/2-12   |
| B 1-4/1-4/2-12  | 2-5/2-5/2-16   | 2-7/2-7/2-20   |
| C 2-5/2-5/2-16  | 2-7/2-7/2-20   | 2-9/2-9/2-24   |
| Emerald Dragon  |                |                |
| A 1-3/1-3/1-10  | 1-4/1-4/2-12   | 1-6/1-6/2-16   |
| B 1-4/1-4/2-16  | 1-6/1-6/3-18   | 1-8/1-8/5-20   |
| C 1-6/1-6/3-18  | 1-8/1-8/5-20   | 1-10/1-10/6-24 |
| Sapphire Dragon |                |                |
| A 1-3/1-3/1-10  | 1-4/1-4/2-12   | 1-6/1-6/4-16   |
| B 1-4/1-4/4-16  | 1-6/1-6/5-20   | 1-8/1-8/6-24   |
| C 1-6/1-6/5-20  | 1-8/1-8/6-24   | 1-10/1-10/7-28 |
| Amethyst Dragon |                |                |
| A 1-4/1-4/2-16  | 1-6/1-6/2-20   | 1-8/1-9/3-24   |
| B 1-6/1-6/4-24  | 1-8/1-8/5-30   | 1-10/1-10/3-36 |
| C 1-8/1-8/5-30  | 1-10/1-10/6-36 | 1-12/1-12/5-40 |
| Ruby Dragon     |                |                |
|                 | 2-12/2-12/4-48 |                |

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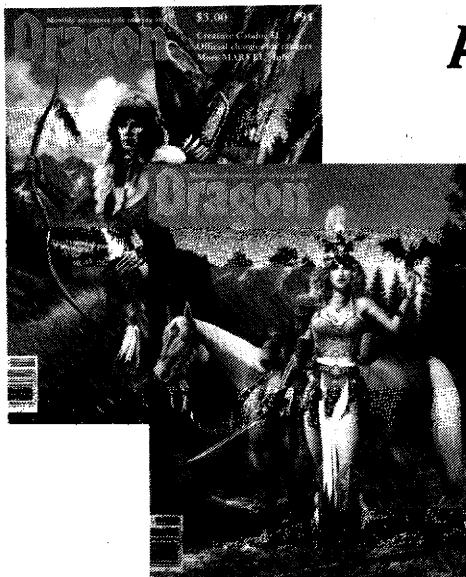
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# THE HOUSE IN THE FROZEN LANDS



# The House in the Frozen Lands

## A mid-level adventure for the AD&D® game

### by James Adams

*The House in the Frozen Lands* is an AD&D® game module for 6-10 characters, each of 4th to 8th level. It is recommended that the party include a balance of each character class, but specifically at least one ranger character and, if desired, one psionic character, but no evil characters. The Dungeon Master should read the entire module carefully before running this adventure, due to the use of complex NPCs and situations.

#### Players' introduction

The House in the Frozen Lands, located in the arctic, is the main teaching house and one of the three central shrines of Ptah, Maker of the Universes, known here as The Sustainer of Order (see reference on Ptah in *Legends & Lore*, page 48). This House of Teaching, known as the Scholia, trains not only devotees of the Sustainer of Order who wish to serve in the various temples of Ptah, but also paying students of nobility or leading members of the merchant class. Of course, only students of lawful neutral alignment may pass into the full program of study. The Scholia has gained an excellent reputation for impartiality and scholarship, primarily due to the management of its High Priest, Mondaleth of Silverthorne.

The Baron of Lesser Nhollia (whose youngest daughter Dhol is presently studying at the Scholia) has just been selected to succeed Talvernesse II, Lord of the Crystal Throne, who has died childless. In ascending to the Crystal Throne, the Baron wishes to gather a group of wise councilors around him and desires Mondaleth to be one of them. Hoping that this position would be of sufficient interest to Mondaleth, the Baron has hired a group of adventurers to travel the perilous journey through the vast frozen waste to the Scholia, in order to inform the High Priest of the Scholia of the offer and escort him back in the event he accepts.

"Please inform the Saintly Mondaleth," intones the Baron, "that we desire to have his fathomless wisdom at our side, so that we might tread new paths of enlightened statesmanship. If he so desires, he can play a major role in the Select Council that will guide the helm of our great land. It goes without saying that his assistance would be of great worth to us. Such appreciation will be shown most generously to both him and the noble rite of which he is a follower. Our gratitude will also extend to those who succeed in delivering his services to us."

After the player characters accept the Baron's fee (1000 gp each, though this amount may be altered by the DM as desired), they are provided with supplies and equipment (including snowshoes) and given directions to lead them on their journey through the Frozen Lands to the Scholia. The Baron also passes some general information to the PCs about the Scholia, which will be revealed later in the adventure.

#### The arctic wilderness

The party proceeds almost due north from the Baron's stronghold and enters the Frozen Lands. The terrain of the arctic wilderness varies from extremely flat or slightly rolling plains to deeply cut hilly areas and jagged mountains, which can reach 7000' in elevation. Currently, the weather is quite cold (about 10°F), but the sky remains clear throughout the duration of this adventure. The glare from the sun on the snow cuts visibility to half a mile at times. Local vegetation includes lichens, mosses, sedges, grasses, and rare dwarf willow and birch trees.

Movement rates will be slowed when traveling through snow-covered areas". A character with a normal burden may travel only

five miles per day on foot, but twice that with snowshoes. Dog sleds (15" movement) may be used to carry extra equipment.

While the PCs are in hilly areas or mountains, there is a 1 in 20 chance each day for an avalanche to inundate the entire party for 4-48 hp damage each (save vs. petrification for half damage). A 60% chance exists for each character to become buried. Use three times each character's chance to bend bars/lift gates to see if he can dig himself out. There is a 5% cumulative chance of finding someone per round of searching. A character must roll his constitution or less on a d20 to have enough air to survive until uncovered.

#### Encounter table

The following encounter table may be used as the characters travel through the arctic wilderness. The base chance for an encounter is 1 in 12. Check for an encounter three times daily, or six times daily in the mountains.

| Creature                                | Plains | Hills | Mountains | Coast |
|---|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Bear, northern                          | 01-05  | 01-06 | 01-04     | 01-15 |
| Bowler                                  | -      | 07    | 05        | -     |
| Devil dog                               | 06-07  | 08-09 | 06-11     | -     |
| Dragon, white*                          | 08-09  | 10-11 | 12-17     | -     |
| Frost men                               | 10     | 12    | 18-20     | -     |
| Galeb duhr                              | -      | 13    | 21-23     | -     |
| Giant, frost                            | 11-13  | 14-16 | 24-28     | -     |
| Herd animal                             | 14-49  | 17-50 | 29-58     | -     |
| Hoar fox                                | 50-52  | 51-52 | 59-60     | -     |
| Ice lizard*                             | 53     | 53    | 61-62     | -     |
| Men                                     | 54-62  | 54-60 | 63-67     | 16-33 |
| Owl, ordinary*                          | 63-66  | 61-66 | 68-74     | -     |
| Pudding, white                          | 67-70  | 67-70 | 75-76     | -     |
| Raven, huge*                            | 71-73  | 71-76 | 77-82     | -     |
| Remorhaz                                | 74-75  | 77-78 | 83-84     | -     |
| Sable or mink                           | 76-77  | 79-80 | 85-86     | -     |
| Sea lion                                | -      | -     | -         | 34-40 |
| Seal                                    | -      | -     | -         | 41-70 |
| Selkie                                  | -      | -     | -         | 71-75 |
| Snake, giant white-furred constrictor** | 78-82  | 81-84 | 87-89     | -     |
| Taer                                    | -      | -     | 90        | -     |
| Toad, ice                               | 83-85  | 85-86 | 91-92     | -     |
| Walrus                                  | -      | -     | -         | 76-00 |
| Wolf                                    | 86-94  | 87-95 | 93-97     | -     |
| Wolf, winter                            | 95-97  | 96-97 | 98-99     | -     |
| Yeth hound                              | 98-99  | 98-99 | -         | -     |
| Yeti                                    | 00     | 00    | 00        | -     |

\* - 75% likely to be encountered while airborne.

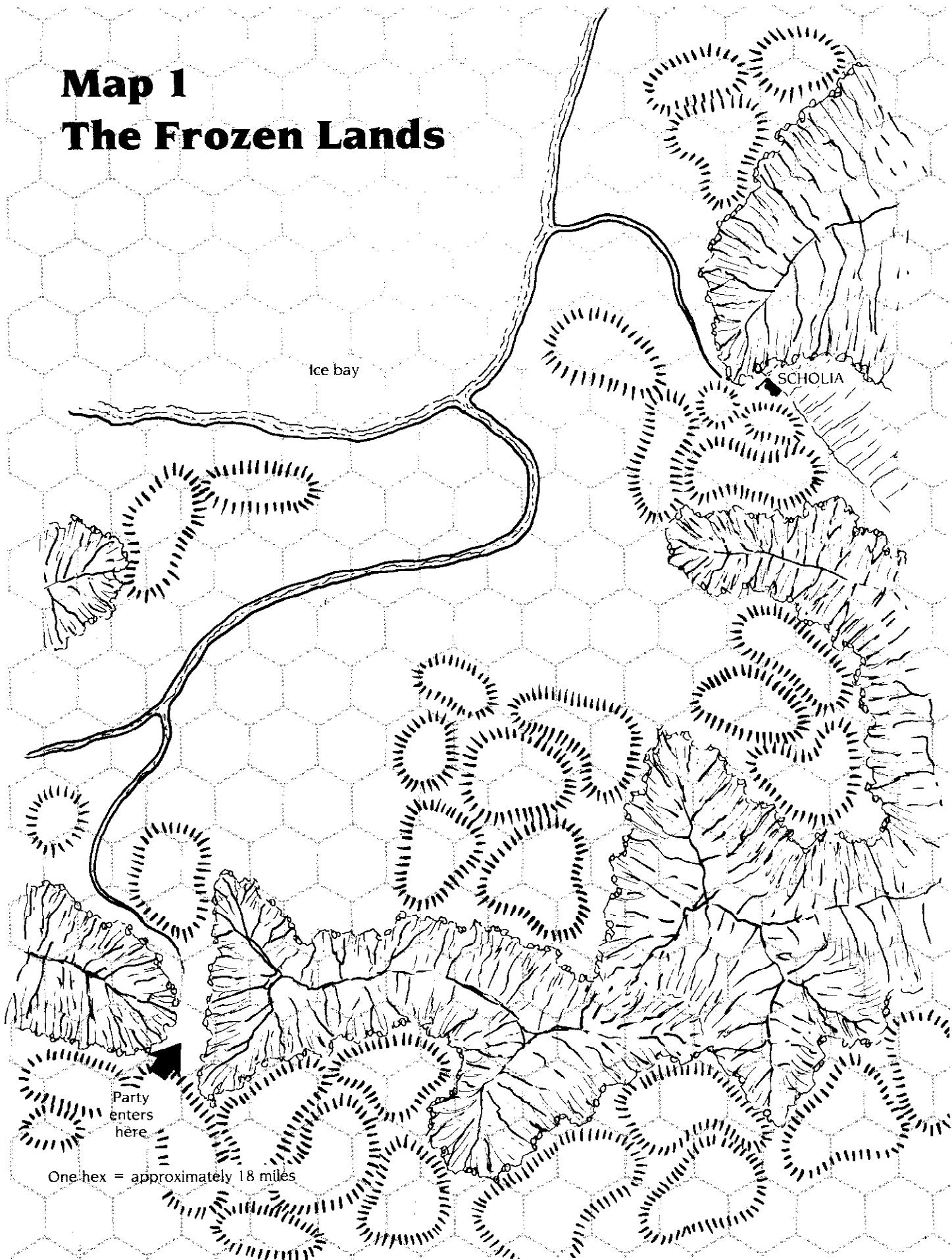
\*\* - As per DMG, page 183.

Frost giants encountered will be a raiding party of six adult males and three adult females. Their stronghold is located to the east of the area described on Map 1. They are searching for a pair of young frost giants who have been captured by someone called the Mage of the Ice Tower. They are extremely aggravated and will automatically assume that any human party they encounter is at fault. Give them a +4 to their save vs. *charm monster*.

Herd animals encountered will either be musk oxen or caribou

# Map 1

## The Frozen Lands



(equal chance of either). Treat musk oxen as the wild ox or bull in the *Monster Manual*, page 12. Musk oxen are dark brown to black in color and give off a musky odor. Both sexes have very sharp, low curved horns, the bases of which meet across the forehead. Treat caribou encounters as the Irish deer in the *Monster Manual*, page 55, but with a movement rate of 24"//12". Caribou or reindeer are brownish in color, lighter on the back, darker on the head and legs. They have a throat mane of whitish hair. Both sexes have antlers. They can trot for long periods of time, even outrunning wolves, and can swim fairly well. A single caribou used as a pack animal can carry 90 lbs. of equipment, or pull a sled loaded with 450 lbs. or two men forty miles per day.

Men encountered inland will either be 10-60 tribesmen (70% chance) or 30-80 merchants (30% chance). However, none of the merchants will be mounted (nor armed with lances or pole arms). The party will have either 10-30 caribou as pack animals (80%) or be using 2-8 sleighs pulled by caribou (20%). Their merchandise will consist of furs, gems, and walrus ivory.

Men encountered on the coast will be 50-100 merchants. However, none of them will be mounted. They will be armored as buccaneers, and will have 1-4 dog sleds and a boat anchored offshore. Their merchandise will consist of seal carcasses, whale blubber, and walrus ivory. The pay chest will be hidden aboard the ship. There is a 60% chance that they are harvesting seal fur, and a 40% chance they are taking walrus tusks and blubber; in either case, the appropriate animal will also be present.

Sable or mink encounters are treated as the weasel in *Monster Manual II*.

Seal encounters will be with 40-100 northern fur seals (AC 7, MV 6"//36", HD 3, #AT 2, DAM 1-6 plus tail swat for 1-4). Seals are air breathers, but can remain submerged for as long as 15 minutes. They are gregarious and can congregate in large groups on the ice, playing in and out of the water. This species is dark chocolate in color, with some grayish hair around the shoulders; it can reach 6' in length and weigh 600 lbs. The cow is grayish and somewhat smaller than the bull.

Walrus encounters will be with 20-60 animals (AC 6, MV 6"//24", HD 11, #AT 2, DAM 2-12 plus tail swat for 2-12). Walrus can reach 11' long and weigh 3000 lbs. Their skin is rough and weathered with coarse, sparse hair and a thick layer of blubber as insulation. Both sexes have tusks which sometimes reach a length of 40 inches and a weight of 9 lbs. They are used both for digging for clams and in self-defense. Cow tusks are more slender than the ones on the bulls. Even polar bears do not attack walruses.

#### P r e - s e t   e n c o u n t e r s

Two nights after the party ventures into the arctic lands, it will discover a frozen body half-buried in the snow. It is that of a man wearing black robes belted with a silver cord, a helm of black metal, and a loose black hood (the raiment of a cleric of Ptah, as the party was informed by the Baron). The man was stabbed in the back, but the injury was not severe enough to justify his death from that wound alone. (This may suggest poison to an inquisitive PC.) At his waist is a leather pouch which has been slashed open. Tracks lead up to the man; then head back in the direction from which both they and the tracks of the slain man came. After a few hundred yards, the tracks are eliminated by blowing snow.

A ranger PC, if he successfully follows the trail to its end, may judge that the slain man was in a hurry, but probably stopped for a brief rest when he was killed by surprise. The one who presumably followed and killed him was in no hurry on the way back to his place of origin. Little else can be told.

One day later in their travels, the player characters will hear the confusing sounds of a battle: howls, yips, snarls, grunts, and so forth. When they make their way to the source of the sounds (several hundred yards distant), the PCs will see a pack of wolves attacking a lone human female figure. Several scattered wolf bodies attest to the fact that she has been standing her own so far. There are still eight wolves attacking the fighter (wolves: AC 7, MV 18", HD 2 + 2; hp 18, 15, 15, 15, 10, 8, 8, 7; #AT 1, DAM 2-5).

After the battle has ended, the fighter, Loorha, will claim to be the sole survivor of an ill-fated venture into a place called the Crystal

Caverns, which claimed nine companions. She will then become upset and refuse to speak any further about that. She is in reality Loorha-ged-Thylorh, a member of an evil religious cult known as the Sept of Infamy (described below). If any ranger (and only a ranger) asks if Loorha's boots produce prints like those of the one who slew the robed man, the answer is an unqualified yes.

Loorha is a 6th-level assassin (CE, AC 2, MV 12", hp 29 [25 when encountered]) wearing *leather armor +2* and a *ring of protection +2*, and using a long *sword +1* and a *dagger +2*. She has two poisoned daggers hidden on her person and wears two gold earrings (worth 6 and 8 gp). The dagger poison takes 3-4 rounds to take effect and delivers 5-30 hit points of damage at the rate of 5 hp per round (or none, if a save vs. poison is made at +1). She also has one potion each of *flying* and *climbing*, and four vials of the same poison that is on her daggers. Her thieving abilities are: 45% pick pockets, 37% open locks, 35% detect traps, 33% move silently, 25% hide in shadows, 15% hear noise, 88% climb walls, and 20% read languages. She also has a psionic ability of 146, attack/defense modes ABE/FH, and the disciplines of *body weaponry* (6th level of mastery), *invisibility* (4th level), and *aura alteration* (2nd level). She is an impious liar and prankster, appearing friendly but quite ruthless in nature, with extremely hedonistic tastes.

Loorha will try to ingratiate herself with the party, using seduction and her power of *aura alteration* to deceive PCs as to her true nature, always trying to influence them not to head in the direction of the Scholia. Eventually, she will try to slip away from the party and return to the Scholia ahead of the adventurers. If she succeeds in this, Oolay'ah (the leader of the Sept) will be prepared for the adventurers who arrive there. In this case, the randomly encountered parties will be on the lookout for the characters (+2 on their rolls to surprise). If Loorha's disguise as a thief is penetrated (2% cumulative chance per day), she will attempt an immediate escape and will try to kill anyone who hinders her.

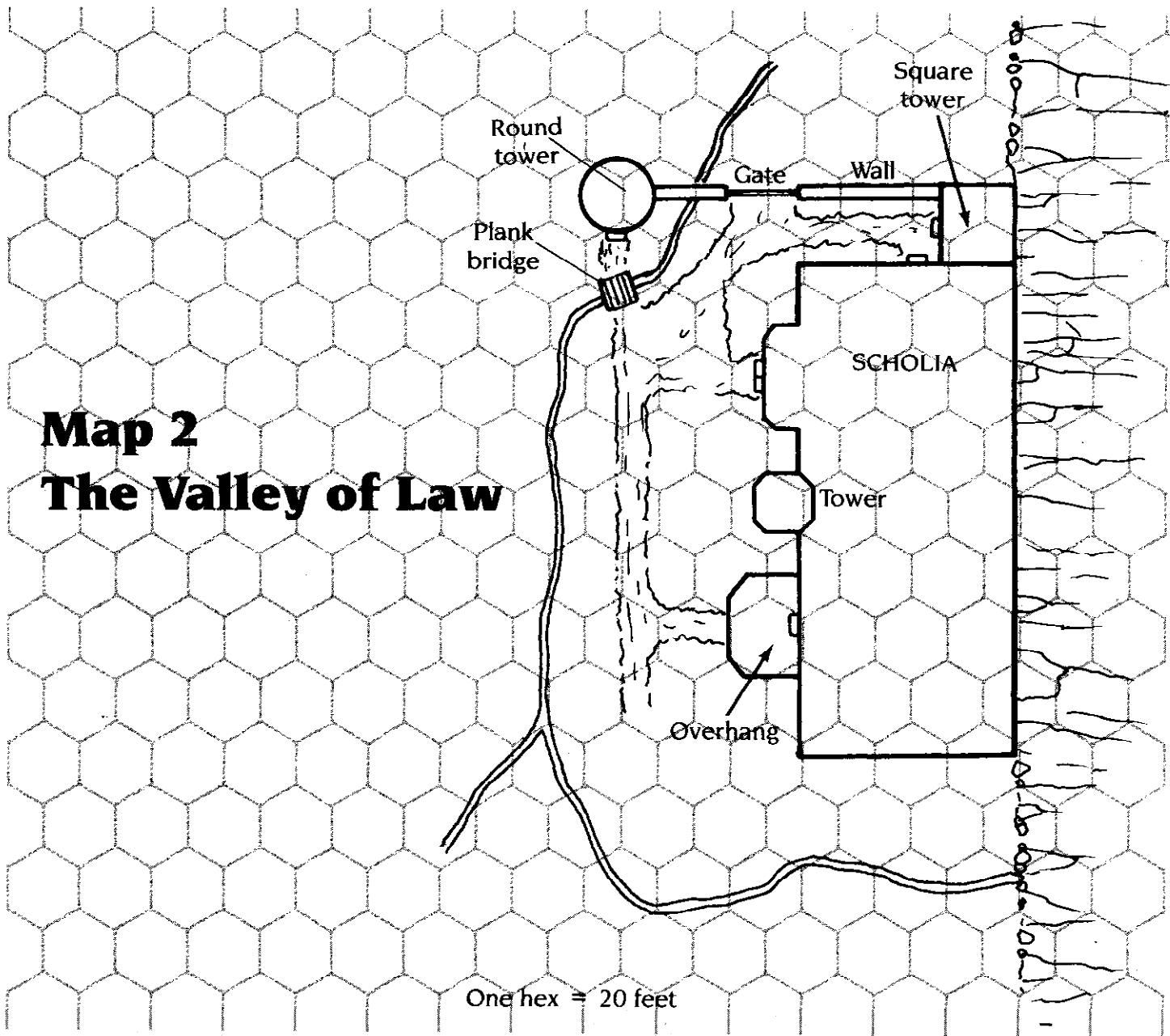
#### D M ' s i n t r o d u c t i o n

An uncertain reception at journey's end awaits the PCs, because all is not well at the Scholia. Several weeks ago, as a storm was raging fiercely, two weather-beaten travelers, a man and a woman, stumbled up to the gate of the Scholia. The High Priest's offer of refuge to the travelers was eagerly accepted, but this generous gesture was repaid with terror. After recovering from the ravages of the winds and snow, aided by the tender care of the residents, the travelers, Karlekh and Manorlah (see room 49), managed to elude the security guards and defenses of the Scholia, and opened the gate to allow invaders to take over the building entirely. Several of the guards were captured by a *mirror of life trapping* that had been substituted for a normal mirror. Several of the leading figures of the Scholia were then banished to the depths of the *mirror*. Others, including the paying students, have since been killed or enslaved.

The invaders were then revealed to be members of a locally feared matriarchal society known as the Sept of Infamy. This particular group is led by Oolay'ah-ben-Ethrah-mah-Lanoorha-Tis (from now on referred to as simply Oolay'ah, or the Lanoorha-Tis). Her name shows that she can claim both male descent from the Ethrah clan and female descent from the Lanoorha clan. She is also the "Tis," or clan leader, of all those who claim descent from the legendary Sept founder Lanoorha.

After Oolay'ah took over, she captured a band of fur trappers who innocently came to the Scholia for help. This group of sturdy dwarves was then put to work expanding a cavern system behind the Scholia into a labyrinth, smoothing out passages and making them more easily traveled. The Sept then set up a shrine to the lawful evil deity Loviatar, known as the Maiden of Pain or the Pain-Giver. Most recently, one of the Scholia's clerics managed to escape, but he was tracked down by Loorha before he could reach help. Loorha is an outcast of the Thylorh clan because of her lowborn heritage, now loosely associated with the Lanoorha-Tis.

A *legend lore* spell or similar power will produce the following information. The Sept of Infamy was founded by a group of nine who banded together against a presumed affront from another evil clan, though this is often disputed by scholars. The nine swore a blood oath of loyalty to Loviatar and successfully avenged their



## Map 2 The Valley of Law

insult. Their victory over supposed oppression and other similar bloody feats have attracted strong adversity over the years, but the Sept has managed to hold its own and even thrive, often despite violent disagreement with itself. As an example, the Lanoorha and Thylorh clans have enjoyed a long-standing blood feud, the wound of which heals over from time to time only to explode again into barbaric violence. In this respect, it must be mentioned that Sept members will fight to the death with wild cries of "unlech Tisi!" and the appropriate clan name. Both male and female members of the Sept have a strong attraction to jewelry and gems of all kinds. It is also noteworthy that the Ethrah clan has a strong elvish strain to this day, which surfaces in the affinity its members have for magic.

The DM may wish to use members of the Sept in further adventures. Any surviving members of the Lanoorha clan will certainly not take the capture of its Regalia (see area 52) at all lightly. It is also possible that a rival family, such as the Thylorh clan, would also be interested in acquiring these items in order to embarrass the Lanoorha-Tisi.

This adventure includes several other possibilities for expansion into the DM's own campaign, including passing references to the Crystal Caverns and the Mage of the Ice Tower. These can be tailored into clues to other adventures appropriate to each campaign. There may also prove to be interesting complications caused by the release of all of the victims of the *mirror of life* trapping. The PCs

may even wish to aid Mylo'omha (see area 28) to return to his distant and possibly extinct home.

### The Scholia of Law

The Scholia is nestled in a valley in the mountains, away from the civilized lands, where (according to its founders) those seeking the higher paths of law may do so in relative peace. The entrance to the valley is quite narrow (100'), but the valley then widens out to a width of several hundred feet for most of its 20-mile length. The mountains on the west side slope up very gradually — first a line of low hills and then progressively higher slopes. Several streams of freezing water gush down between the hills and join in a brook which runs through the length of the valley. The east side of the valley, however, consists of a long line of almost vertical cliffs that stand 100' high. Mountains begin directly behind these cliffs; thus, the only easy approach to the Scholia is through the valley opening.

The opening to the valley, between a large hillock and the beginning of the cliff, is blocked by a 20' high wall. The wall is 5' wide and extends 60' from a round tower to a square tower that abuts on the cliff. There is a large gate in the wall. To the left is a cord that will ring a bell located in the guards' common room. On the far side of the gate, a path guides guests around to the main entrance to the guest quarters. A small path leads on further to the private entrance into the clerical portion of the building. To the left as one enters, the

ground slopes down to an entrance to the Dog Stables. To the right, the round tower has a door opening into a spiral stairway up to the battlement along the top of the wall. At the far end of the battlement, a door opens into the armory.

The Scholia itself is constructed of cut stone blocks, and consists of two above-ground stories plus a cellar. A small octagonal tower projects over one part of the building. Interior walls and ceiling surfaces are finished with plaster. Floors are mostly bare stone. The ceiling height of the ground floor is 12', that of the upper floor only 10'. The cellar rooms all have arched ceilings of 6-10'. The location of the Scholia was selected because of the hot springs that issue into a natural cavern within the cliff face. The residents of the Scholia have long since widened the orifice leading to the hot springs, for their own use as hot baths and a natural source of hot water.

If the PCs approach the Scholia openly, Phel'akh, the guard captain on duty (see area 17), will answer the bell and question them at length through a small grating in the door as to their purpose in coming, who they are, where they hail from, etc. If he is attacked and defeated, it will only be 20 minutes before the remainder of the guards call for reinforcements to search for him. If he is not attacked, he will tell the PCs that no guests may be received at present because it is High Feast Week. If they insist, he will re-enter the Scholia; after 20 minutes, Karlekh (see area 49) will return, with all of the guards on duty, and reluctantly admit the party to the guest rooms. Karlekh will inform the PCs that it may be some time before the High Priest has time to properly receive them. During the night, the Lanoorha-Tis will order a group of her guards (labyrinth random encounter group #1) to take the PCs captive.

If, on the other hand, the PCs decide to attempt a clandestine entry, they must either scale the wall in some manner or force the gate (three characters of strength 17 or better must roll their bend bars/lift gates scores at the same time; one try per character per round). The gate will take 16 points of battering damage (from blunt weapons only) before breaking, but if this tactic is used there is a 90% chance for the guards to be alerted. If the PCs have not previously approached the Scholia openly, there is only a 15% chance for one of the guards to observe a silent attempt; if the PCs are noisy, there is an 80% chance for them to be observed. After the PCs have passed the wall, they may then reconnoiter the yard area and decide which of the three doors they wish to attempt to enter.

#### Scholia random encounter table

Check for a random encounter only when the room description indicates the possibility for one. Roll a d8 to select an encounter. None of the encounters may be repeated.

Note that all students of the Scholia are young adults, ranging in age from 15-18. Those students who have a character class are the minimum ages for those classes (see *DMG*, page 12).

#### Roll Result

- 1 Two of the Sept members are on an errand. One is a female 3rd-level cleric (LE, AC 4, MV 6", hp 19) wearing splint mail and using a *flail* +1. Her spells are *bless*, *command*, *remove fear*, *sanctuary chant*, *slow poison*, and *spiritual hammer*. She has a leather belt with six obsidians (95 gp) and a small ivory box holding fragrant petals (185 gp). The other is a female 2nd/2nd-level half-elf lighter/magic-user (CE, AC 4, MV 12", hp 16 [CON 17]), wearing *chain mail* +1 and using a scimitar. Her spells are *hold portal* and *burning hands*. She has a brooch of a silver snake entwined around a citrine egg (80 gp) and an earring of silver (1 gp).
- 2 Two escaped prisoners, clerics of the Scholia, will attempt to flee at their first glimpse of the PCs. They will only be surprised on a 1 in 6. One is a 1st-level male cleric (LN, AC 10, MV 12", hp 5) trained with a flail. His spells are *protection from evil*, *cure light wounds*, and *bless*. The other is a 2nd-level female cleric (LN, AC 10, MV 12", hp 12) trained in mace and flail. Her spells are all those indicated above, plus *sanctuary*. They have no useful information- about their captors.

#### Roll Result

- 3 Two frightened students on an errand for the Sept. They are both O-level male humans (LN and NG, AC 10, MV 12", hp 5, 4), both trained with daggers. They have the following information concerning the situation in the Scholia: The Scholia staff has mysteriously vanished; devotees of an evil deity have taken over, led by a powerful woman who has some demonic-looking familiar; the usurpers have a shrine in some caves beyond the hot springs; and, there are still many captives alive, but the number is rapidly dwindling, and they are being taken away somewhere.
- 4 One of the Scholia clerics, on an errand. He is *dominated* by Manorlah and will attempt to flee to warn the guards on the upper level. He is a 1st-level cleric (LN, AC 10, MV 12", hp 6) trained in mace. His spells are *bless* and *light*.
- 5 One of the Sept on a personal errand. He is a 7th-level fighter (CE, AC 2, MV 9", hp 54 [CON 16], #AT 3/2) wearing *plate mail* +1 and using a *bastard sword* +1, +3 vs. *lycanthropes* and *shape-changers* (Oolay'ah doesn't know about the sword's special powers). The sword has an intelligence of 12, an ego of 5, CE, and can detect sloping passages in a 1" radius. It communicates by semi-empathy. Any character whose alignment is not chaotic evil will suffer 5 hp damage each time he touches any portion of the sword, unless it is in the grasp of a chaotic evil character. He also has a *ring of spell storing* with four magic-user spells (*stinking cloud*, *charm monster*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, and *feeblemind*), a gold buckle (30 gp), a bracelet consisting of a single platinum band (250 gp), and a silver clasp set with a chrysoberyl (90 gp) on his cloak.
- 6 Three Sept members delivering more treasure to the strongroom (the secret chamber next to room 27). The first is a female 3rd-level fighter (NE, AC 3, MV 6", hp 24) wearing plate mail and using a long sword. She wears an armband of filigree silver (65 gp). The second is a male 2nd-level cleric (LE, AC 5, MV 9", hp 11) wearing chain mail and using a mace. His spells are *bless*, *cure light wounds*, and *protection from good*. He has an earring of silver (1 gp). The third is a female 2nd-level magic-user (LE, AC 6, MV 12", hp 6) wearing *bracers of defense* AC 6 and using a staff. Her spells are *sleep* and *Tenser's floating disc* — currently in use to transport 900 sp, 500 ep, 300 gp, 200 pp, and a small coffer of 30 gems worth a total of 8500 gp. She wears an earring of silver set with a moonstone (60 gp). The treasure was found elsewhere in the Scholia.
- 7 Three of the Scholia clerics on an errand. They are *charmed* by the Sept and will attempt to warn the Sept members in the Labyrinth. They are 1st-level clerics, two female and one male (LN, AC 10, MV 12"; hp 9, 7, 6), trained in mace and flail. Their spells are *cure light wounds* and *resist cold*; *bless*, *command* and *remove fear*; and *cure light wounds* and *sanctuary*. They know only that a group of women with "powerful eyes" (a reference to psionics) have taken over the Scholia.
- 8 Leph, a student serving the Sept out of fear, will run to the party, assuming they are members of the Sept, in order to tattle on some of the other students who are planning to jump the next Sept member to enter their room. He is a 0-level male (CN, AC 10, MV 12", hp 3) trained in dagger. He has been snooping on the Sept and has the following information, but will be reluctant to reveal it until he is assured the party will defeat Oolay'ah: The Scholia staff have been put "in storage"; the invaders are led by a magic-user named Oolay'ah; Oolay'ah and her party (forty strong!) are devoted to the Pain-Giver; Oolay'ah has an affinity for cats; her consort is a very powerful cleric named Karlekh; and, there are a pair of twin female fighters who are both deadly and beautiful.

## Ground level

**1. Entry Hall:** This room contains six statues of famous clerics devoted to The Sustainer of Order. From left of the door clockwise they are: A) a cleric in a hooded robe offering a flask; B) a cleric in a heavy fur robe holding a child; C) a female cleric in traveling dress brandishing a scroll; D) a seated cleric with head lowered, as if in defeat; E) a group of two clerics supporting a third figure, their arms raised as if to ward off evil; and F) a female cleric meditating. The door to the outside is locked (-10% to chance to pick lock, due to its complexity). There is a 5% chance each 10-minute turn of a random encounter.

**2. Hallway:** There is a 5% chance each turn of a random encounter.

**3. The Saffron Salon:** The walls of this room are decorated with attractive murals. One shows several scenes from the saga of a cleric who healed a chieftain of the Winged Folk (see Best of DRAGON® Magazine Volume III, page 71). The chieftain later returns the favor by assisting him when under attack by several perytons, on his quest for an alpine blossom necessary for healing. Another depicts the fabled cleric Mendelberah in his struggle to rescue one of his henchmen from the Ghoul Marshal at the cost of his own life.

The furniture consists of two oval tables, each surrounded by six armchairs, and a divan. There are also two large carpets on the floor. All of the chairs and the divan are upholstered in saffron-colored velvet. There is a sideboard along the north wall. A crystal decanter and eight glasses on a silver tray are placed on it. The four cabinet doors in the sideboard contain 12 other glasses, several bottles of liquors (one is an herbal distillate which can heal 1-2 hp damage once per day, but will slightly intoxicate each indulger; another is a *sleep* potion which will put any taster to sleep for 2-8 turns if a save vs. spells fails), a silver dinner service for 10 (150 gp), and candles and linen cloths.

**4. Guest Room:** This room is furnished with two large beds with plain but sturdy wooden frames covered with sleeping furs, two wooden chests, and a wardrobe. There are also three wooden chairs with cushions, a small wooden cabinet with a ceramic bowl and a pitcher of tepid water on top, and a divan which can be used for overflow visitors. The room is rather dusty, as it has not been cleaned or used since Oolay'ah's arrival. There are rough woolen hangings with symbolic patterns. There are also wall sconces with candles in them, shielded from drafts by covers made from seal hide. A fireplace in one corner has a pile of coals and tinder ready for use beside it. Each of the chests has a brass lock. They are unlocked, and the key is inside in a removable wooden shelf (Karlekh has an extra copy of each key). The wardrobe has several black robes with hoods of a rough, nubby homespun cloth and a black cord for guests to wear at the worship ceremonies. A secret drawer in the bed frame (5% cumulative chance per round of searching to find it) contains a clerical scroll of *remove curse*.

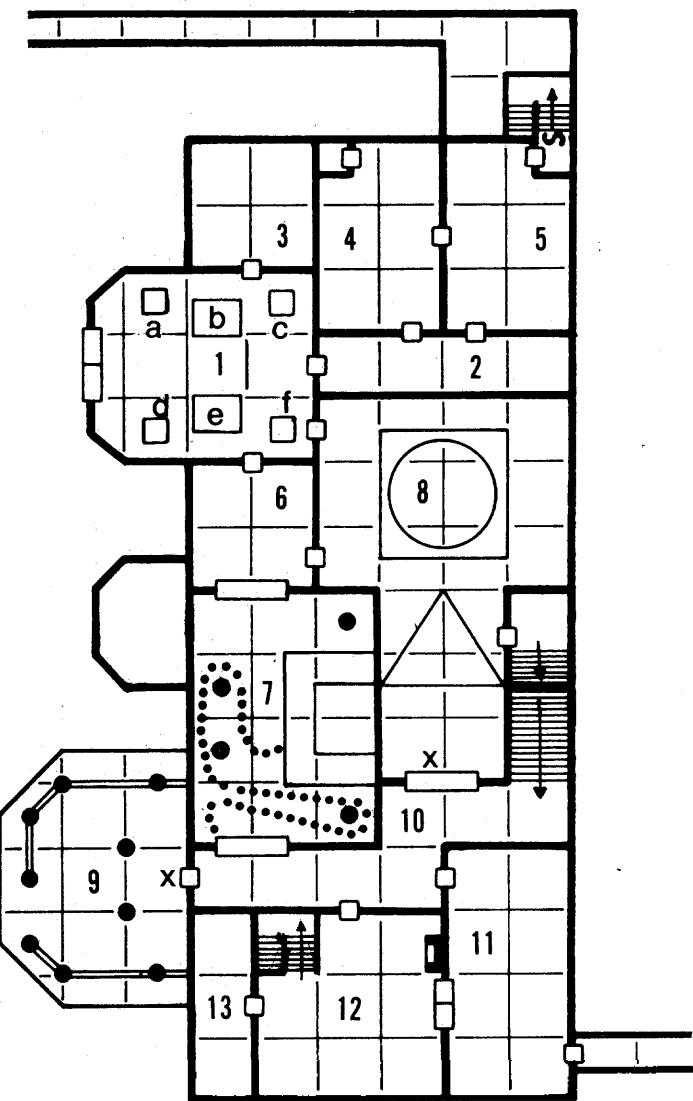
Oolay'ah has replaced the sleeping furs on one bed with enchanted furs from an arctic constrictor snake, which act as a *rope of entanglement*. The furs can constrict three man-sized victims in three segments: one for the trigger (darkness), one to strike, and one to entwine. They will deliver 1-3 hp damage per round to each victim. The furs are AC 3 and take 16 hp damage from edged weapons before being destroyed.

**5. Guest Room:** This room is similar in most respects to the other guest room. A secret door is located in the back wall of the wardrobe, behind removable shelves. If a hidden lever is not pressed (check against find/remove traps), a pale green gas will billow out of a small hole in the ceiling of the passage beyond the door. The gas will cause 2-4 characters to suffer spasms of weakness, resulting in the loss of 2-5 points of strength for 1-6 turns (save vs. poison for no effect). There is a 5% chance each turn of a random encounter.

**6. Waiting Room:** This room is furnished with two low, round tables, each surrounded by four chairs upholstered in white velvet

## Map 3 Ground level

One square = 10 feet



with silver piping. A *dagger +1, cursed* is hidden underneath one table. The dagger acts as a dagger +1, but will force its owner to attack until an enemy is dead. The owner can never use another weapon until exorcised. The ceiling of this room is only 8' high, both to emphasize the grandeur of the chapel and audience chamber beyond, and to allow for the lavabo above. Murals on the walls are enchanted to soothe and ease the occupants of the room (save vs. spells or receive the effects of a *remove fear* spell; save can be negated at PC's will). There is a 5% chance for a random encounter.

**7. Audience Chamber:** This room features a dais with a simple stone throne and four chairs on it. Carvings along the front edge of the dais read: "He Who Follows The Lawful Way Shall Pass." There are four pillars shaped like female figures supporting an elaborate ceiling of symbols appropriate to The Sustainer of Order. The walls are also covered with intricate designs of squares, circles, triangles, and interlocking diamonds worked in silver. The floor is of tile, mostly off-white but with single gold tiles seemingly scattered at

random. The gold tiles outline a vague path leading out to the east doors. There is only a 5% chance per point of intelligence for each character to spot the path. If anyone attempts to exit through these doors without following the path, two of the pillars (M and N on the map) will animate as caryatid columns. Anyone who has entered through the east doors will be permitted to exit through them without attack. (The columns are AC 5, MV 6", HD 5, hp 22 each, #AT 1, DAM 2-8, special defense.) If the party members retreat from the door, the columns will revert to stone.

The stone throne will radiate lawful neutral magic. Any good or evil character who sits in it will receive 6 hp damage; any chaotic character who sits in it will receive 12 hp damage. These shocks are cumulative in effect, but will affect each character only once. The chair is enchanted and will bestow the following powers upon a lawful neutral occupant: *protection from good or evil, 10' radius* continuously, *detect lie and fear at will, hold person* three times a day, *domination* once per day, and *commune* once per week.

**8. Chapel:** The room has bare stone walls, but these are obscured by six inches of ice covering every surface. There are elaborate, almost gothic traceries of ice creating magnificent arches and lacy curtains. *Continual light* spells have been cast in many locations with the most artistic purposes in mind, creating intricate patterns on the floor. Clever use of a *wish* has served to protect the ice sculpting for centuries to come. A large round altar of yellow marble stands on a raised square dais. Another raised area, triangular in shape, has a marble front. Oolay'ah has commanded *two charmed* gargoyles to stay here, appealing to their greed (AC 5, MV 9"/15", HD 4+4, hp 27 and 21, #AT 4, DAM 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4, +1 or better weapon to hit). The south door is protected by a *glyph of warding* on the floor that will deliver 18 hp cold damage to anyone who triggers it.

**9. Portico:** This area is raised above ground level. An inscription over the door reads: "He Who Sees The Balance May Enter." There are nine pillars that support the extension of the floor above. Ornamental screens close off most of the spaces between the pillars. The doors are kept locked (-20% to chance to pick lock) and are guarded by a *glyph of warding* that will blind anyone who triggers it.

**10. Hallway:** There is a 10% cumulative chance per turn of a random encounter here.

**11. Refectory:** The room holds two large plain wooden tables surrounded by chairs. One of the chairs (marked T on the map) is really a lesser mimic (AC 7, MV 3", HD 7, #AT 1, DAM 3-12, glue). The mimic will attack until offered food. If properly bribed, it will describe what it knows: A party of at least twenty has successfully invaded the Scholia; there are caves "across the springs;" and, it has smelled large cats. The mimic crept into the Scholia during the confusion of the attack.

**12. Kitchen:** The room has the usual cabinets, counters, cupboards, drawers of utensils, spices, pots, and pans. There are brick ovens on both sides of a large fireplace, with several spits and hooks on which to hang kettles. There is a dumbwaiter to deliver food to the private dining room upstairs. One cabinet contains ceramic dishes and an inexpensive brass table service. Another cabinet (locked) holds silver dishes and a table service for twenty (250 gp). There are two bedrolls on the floor with packs beside them. The packs contain standard adventuring equipment, and traveling illusionist spell books with the following spells: *color spray, dancing lights, detect illusion, wall of fog, blindness, detect magic, and misdirection*. There is a 20% cumulative chance per turn of a random encounter here.

**13. Pantry:** The walls of this room are covered with cabinets and storage bins of every size. Small amounts of every food available are kept here. At present, the stores are rather stale. There is only a 1% cumulative chance per turn of a random encounter here.

## Upper level

**14. Hallway:** There is a 20% chance per turn of a random encounter. Any resulting battle gives a chance for the guards in rooms 15 and 17 (65% chance) or the Sept members in room 24 (35% chance) to hear and investigate.

**15. Common Room:** There are a large table and a small round table here with a total of eight chairs. A small cabinet with a surface for preparing food stands near the fireplace. A normal mirror is hidden behind the cabinet, and a blank space on the wall reveals where it once was hung. Scattered on the small table are two decks of cards and several dice. There is a member of the Sept in the room, a male 3rd-level fighter (NE, AC 4, MV 9", hp 17) wearing chain mail and shield, and using a long sword. A short bow with eight arrows is on the table near him. He wears a golden armband engraved and highlighted with silver (180 gp). There is a normal chance to surprise him. If the characters enter from the hallway, he will call for help before attacking. The guards in the next room will arrive during the next round. There is also a 15% chance for the party in room 24 to hear the sounds of any battle and come to assist.

**16. The Guard Captain's Quarters:** This room is furnished for the Master of Combat's use, with a sturdy wooden bed piled high with sleeping furs, a large locked wooden chest (-20% to chance to pick lock; takes 8 hp battering damage before breaking), a padded armchair near a table with a brass lamp on it, and an oval rug on the floor. A secret compartment in the bed frame holds 23 sp, 17 gp, 4 pp, three 50 gp gems, a small ivory statue of a white dragon (200 gp), and two potions: *heroism* and *invulnerability*. Nythel, the Master of Combat, has a small collection of oil landscapes on the wall. The six paintings, works of Ness-uther, show scenes varying from the infamous Black Fortress Zethyra-nezra, and the wondrous lake Lassorah-lathra ("Star-mirror"), to a view of the Great Forest (200-500 gp each). There is a pack of standard adventuring equipment thrown on the bed. The chest holds a small box of inlaid wood, containing a gold seal set with three small topazes (900 gp); this is the seal of the Lanoorha Clan. The room is unoccupied at present, but now serves as quarters for Karlekh when he is not with Oolay'ah.

**17. Guard Dormitory:** There are three bunk beds with two locked chests at the foot of each bed. The chests have all been forced open, but still have ordinary clothing and other personal belongings of the Scholia's guards in them. The area around one of the bunk beds is separated from the rest of the room by woolen hangings. The room also has a small table with four chairs.

There are four members of the Sept lounging around in the room, but they are in armor, weapons at hand — Oolay'ah's wrath is to be feared as much as are enemies. There is a 3 in 6 chance of surprising them. The other guard in the common room will arrive in two rounds after battle erupts. There is only a 5% chance for the three Sept members in Room 24 to hear any disturbance and come to assist. The first villain is Phel'akh-ged-Lanoorha, a male 5th-level fighter (CE, AC 2, MV 9", hp 31) wearing *plate mail* +1, using a long sword +1 and a hand axe. He has +1 to hit and +3 on damage, due to his strength. He has a *ring of water walking*, wears a gold earring with a topaz (515 gp), and has an ivory box with a leather pouch of six pearls in it (800 gp). Phel'akh is inquisitive, opinionated, sometimes rude, but always very energetic.

The second is a female 3rd-level cleric (LE, AC 4, MV 12", hp 15) wearing *chain mail* +1 and using a mace. She has +1 on damage. Her spells are *bless, cure light wounds, cause light wounds, sanctuary, chant, hold person, and silence 15' radius*. She wears a gold ring with an amethyst set in a serpent's head (95 gp), and a chain of ornate silver (60 gp).

The third is a male half-elf 4th/4th-level fighter/magic-user (LE, AC 5, MV 12", hp 18) wearing elfin chainmail, using a long sword and a *dagger* +1. His spells are *hold portal, magic missile, sleep, mirror image, and ray of enfeeblement*. He has a medallion jade on a silver chain (800 gp), an earring of silver with a moonstone (60 gp), and a pair of ivory dice in a small leather pouch (15 gp).

The fourth guard is a female 2nd-level fighter (CE, AC 4, MV 9", hp 13) wearing chain mail with a shield, and using a short sword. She wears a belt with a silver buckle (20 gp) and a gold earring with a carnelian (55 gp).

**18. Armory:** This room has several racks of weapons. There are 10 spears, two light crossbows with 30 bolts, four short swords, one long sword, two short bows with 20 arrows (10 are +1), a mace, two hand axes, and a bastard sword (which belongs to Nythel, the Master of Combat). It is a *vorpal weapon* +3 with an intelligence of 13, an ego of 6, LN, and the abilities to *detect traps* of large size in a 1" radius and to *heal* once a day. It can speak common, the lawful neutral tongue, shedu, and centaur. A locked door ( -15% to chance to pick lock) leads to the wall rampart and on to the watch tower. The door itself will take 18 hp of battering damage before bursting. A spiral staircase descends to the Dog Stables. Another stair leads up to the roof. There is a 20% cumulative chance per round for the guards next door to hear any noise and investigate, if the guards were not previously encountered. If a fight with them results, it will take the guard in the Common Room only four rounds to arrive to assist.

**19. The High Priest's Private Chamber:** The door to Mondaleth's room is guarded by a *glyph of warding* that will deliver a lightning bolt of 18 hp damage to anyone who triggers it. Curtains divide the room into a living area, a sleeping area, and a study. The living area has a sofa and three chairs grouped around a low oval table. A narrow rectangular rug leads favored guests to the study area. This area has a large carpet with an elaborate floral design (700 gp) with four armchairs upholstered in cream velvet arranged on it. A small altar of white marble veined with gold and a large writing desk with chair complete the study. The sleeping area has a large comfortable bed with sleeping furs, a wardrobe, two locked wooden chests, and a circular rug. The wardrobe contains ordinary clothing in addition to robes appropriate to Mondaleth's rank: black robes, silver belt, black helm, and a silver hood.

Papers and records kept in the drawers of the writing desk deal with the day-to-day routine of the Scholia. Closer examination will reveal that two weeks before the records cease (several weeks ago), two travelers (a man and woman) were found ill and alone near the Scholia. They were brought in and nursed back to health before their real names were learned to be "Norlah" and "Karl." They were unable to explain their presence in so remote a location. The records cease abruptly at that point.

**20. Meditation Room:** This is the private meditation room of Mondaleth. It is furnished with two curved cushions made of cream velvet with delicate saffron designs. Between the couches is a low square table of a fragrant wood, upon which are a small brass lamp and a small box holding eight pieces of *incense of meditation*. The floor is covered with soft white rugs, the walls with hangings of a nubby cloth patterned in saffron, silver, white, and beige. Oolay'ah has released a giant white-furred constrictor snake in the room (AC 5, MV 9") HD 6 + 1, hp 29, #AT 2, DAM 1-4/2-8, plus constriction, surprise 3 in 6).

**21. Lavabo:** This room contains a wooden bench, pegs on the walls for clothing, a set of shelves with towels, and a large sunken ceramic bathing pool with steps leading down into it. The curative powers of the water have been disrupted by the presence of a water weird (summoned by Oolay'ah) which will form in two rounds (AC 4, MV 12", HD 3 + 3, hp 18, #AT 1, special attack and defense).

**22. Clerics' Room:** This room normally houses six clerics. It is divided by woolen hangings into three sleeping areas and a common area. The common area holds a small table with four chairs, a small cabinet, and a kneeling bench. Each of the sleeping areas has a set of bunk beds and two chests. Oolay'ah has stationed some of her people in this room, but at the moment the room is unoccupied. Their packs and personal articles are scattered throughout the room. After ten minutes of searching, the PCs will find the following items: several daggers, rations, a copper armband (1 gp), two potions

(climbing and *fire resistance*), a battle axe, and a spell book with the following spells: *affect normal fires*, *burning hands*, *erase*, *hold portal* and *read magic*. Other useless items will also be found. There is a 5% chance each turn for a random encounter.

**23. Clerics' Room:** This room is similar in most respects to the other cleric's room; however, the door is locked ( -15% to chance to pick locks). It is being used to house the remaining ten of the Scholia clerics. They have been severely mishandled, starved, and beaten, and their morale is quite low. Present are seven male and three female clerics (LN, AC 10, MV 9"; hp 7, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2). Only one of the 1st-level clerics, Telora (a female with 7 hp) will fight. She will insist on going with the party to assist in whatever way she can to return the Scholia to its lawful masters. She is trained with the flail and has the spells: *protection from evil*, *cure light wounds*, and *sanctuary*. The other clerics are too exhausted and will refuse to go against Oolay'ah.

**24. The Masters' Room:** The door to this room is trapped with a *Leomund's trap*. The room itself is divided by woolen hangings into a living and study area, and three individual sleeping areas. The living area has two sofas, a soft upholstered chair, and a small table. The study area has a writing desk, a chair, and a bookshelf. A lamp, an inkwell, and several scrolls are scattered in disarray on the desk. The books in the shelf are also in disorder, some having been thrown on the floor. The scrolls deal with the progress of the students. One is a letter to the Baron of Lesser Nhollia concerning his daughter Dhol's exceptional progress. Each of the three sleeping areas has a comfortable bed and a chest. The chests all have locks, but each has been forced open and the contents scattered.

The first area, from left, belongs to Be'ezhom, Master of Magic. It has a secret door that opens on the stairway down to the cellar and up to the laboratory. A Sept member's pack is on the bed. Among other standard equipment, it holds a potion of *heroism*. There is a secret vault in the wall next to the door that hides Be'ezhom's spell books. Each volume is trapped by a randomly placed page inscribed with *explosive runes* (5% cumulative chance for each page examined, but if not encountered before, the last page will be so inscribed). The books contain the following spells: *burning hands*, *charm person*, *detect magic*, *hold portal*, *light*, *magic missile*, *continual light*, *forget*, *knock*, *levitate*, *web*, *wizard lock*, *blink*, *explosive runes* (the spell), *fire ball*, *hold person*, *slow*, *cone of cold*, and *passwall*.

The middle sleeping area belongs to Ni'osyl, the Apprentice Master. A pack on the bed holds personal items, thieves tools, several daggers, a flask of poison, and three potions of healing.

Three members of the Sept are engaged in meditation in the third sleeping area belonging to Gildah, the Master of Healing. They will surprise the PCs on a 1-4 on a d6. The first is a female 5th-level magic-user (NE, AC 5, MV 12") hp 12) wearing *bracers of defense* AC 6 (+1 for dexterity), and using a staff. Her spells are *burning hands*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *scare*, and *monster summoning I*. She wears an earring of gold with a pearl (105 gp). Her pack contains her spell books, with the following spells in addition to the ones she has memorized: *dancing lights*, *read magic*, *forget* and *slow*. The second is a male 4th-level assassin (CE, AC 4, MV 12") hp 14) wearing *leather armor* +2 and using a long sword and three daggers; two daggers are poisoned. The poison takes 1-4 rounds to take effect, and delivers 5-30 hp damage at the rate of 5 hp per round (save vs. poison for no damage). He wears an ivory medallion on a silver chain (180 gp) and an earring of silver (2 gp). The third of the villains is a male 3rd-level lighter (LE, AC 4, MV 9") hp 17) wearing splint mail and using a bastard sword. He wears a ring of gold with a carnelian (80 gp). There is a 20% chance for the guards in Rooms 15 and 17 to hear the sounds of any battle and investigate.

**25. Lecture Hall:** This room has all the typical furnishings of a lecture room. There is a small lectern, a table with a chair next to it, two map boards, and thirty stools. Tacked on one of the map boards are a map of the general area and a detailed map of the valley and the Scholia (game maps #1 and #2). On the other map board is a

crude list of about 50 names, each with a line drawn through or under it, or a checkmark beside it. Only the name Gildah is without any mark. The list begins as follows:

|           |           |          |          |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Mondaleth | Ny whole  | Be'ezhom | Gildah   |
| Telranuth | Lesethere | Besh-roh | Kaftikel |
| Telora    | Kilphor   | Selevona | Leo-nath |
| Dhol      | Leph      | Benn     | Gedenna  |
| Ni'osyl   |           | etc.     |          |

Oolay'ah composed this list of persons living at the Scholia (and the dwarves who came later and were caught) from studying the Scholia's records and questioning captives. (She is nothing if not methodical.) Names with check marks are live captives; those with lines drawn under them are prisoners of the *mirror*, and those crossed out are dead, killed in combat or as sacrifices. Benn, for example, was one of the students slain by the caterwaul (see area 44); Lyrha is the halfling encountered on the labyrinth random encounters table, being taken to area 49 for sacrifice.

A drawer in the lectern holds the following papers, in order from top to bottom:

- lecture notes on arctic flowering plants
- lecture notes on the dangers of exposure and frostbite
- lecture notes on the ecology of white dragons
- diagrams of rock strata showing glacial erosion
- lecture notes on basic principles of magic
- lecture notes on the history of the worship of Ptah
- lecture notes on various armor types
- a detailed floor plan of the Scholia (game maps #3-6, without secret doors, as far as the hot springs)
- lecture notes on gems and jewelry
- lecture notes on a recent battle

The lecture notes on gems seem to have been much handled, as have the detailed floor plans of the Scholia.

There is a 10% chance each turn of a random encounter.

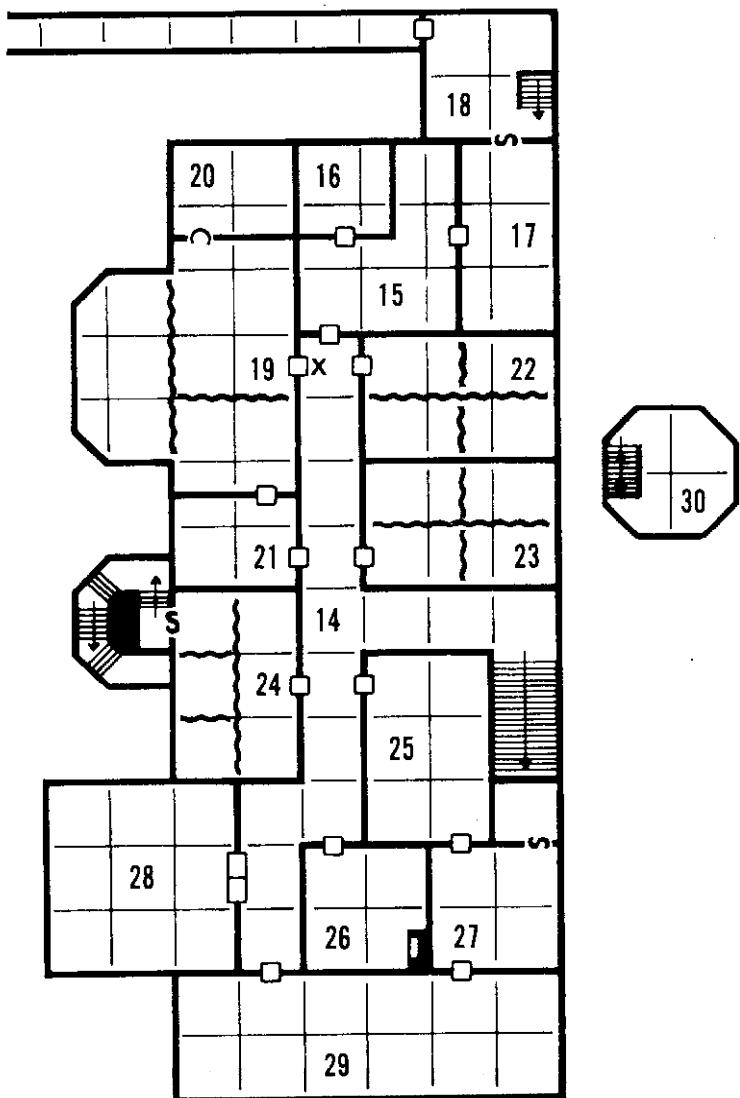
**26. Private Dining Room:** This room is paneled in wood. The furnishings consist of a polished, dark wood table surrounded by eight chairs. The floor is finished with tile, mostly black but with single randomly placed saffron and silver tiles. A dumbwaiter in the wall connects with the kitchen. There are lighter areas on the walls which correspond to missing tapestries. Nothing of particular interest for the PCs is to be found in this room. There is a 5% chance per turn of a random encounter.

**27. Examination Room:** The furnishings of this room consist solely of four work tables, each covered with a variety of odd items designed to test the abilities of students and other individuals. The north table has a multitude of rocks, metal spheres, ceramic cubes, wooden rods, etc. Certain of these have been treated with *Nystul's magic aura* (a test for the use of *detect magic*) or with *fool's gold*. There are also illusory objects, a glass sphere in a leather pouch with *continual light* cast on it, a dish that has been *shattered* and *mended* several times, mysterious writings on parchment scraps, invisible objects, a box which when opened still has a vestige of an *audible glamer* left in it, etc. The west table has locks to be opened, traps to be set, removed or detected, including several *Leomund's traps*, etc. The east table has objects to check for evil or magic, water to purify, flasks to fill with water, things to locate in the middle on the table, etc. The south table has glass balls to lift, things to crush or stretch, a *dagger* -1 with which to test dexterity, a helm that covers the eyes to test hearing (for sneaky footsteps and the like), and a nonmagical glove.

The small secret chamber next door is used by the Scholia to store medications, bandages, and salves. It now holds four chests almost hidden beneath fur clothing, rugs, and tapestries. Two of the chests hold coins: 900 sp, 5000 gp, 4000 ep, and 2000 pp; the third holds seven jeweled daggers (10-70 gp each) and other assorted jewelry, including an ivory scroll case (10 gp), a silver belt buckle shaped like a symbol of Ptah (8 gp), a gold bell (50 gp), a silver ring set with five

## Map 4 Upper level

One square = 10 feet



onyx stones arranged in a pattern (140 gp), an oval moonstone pendant engraved in a likeness of Ptah (95 gp), a small statue of Ptah made of electrum (300 gp), an inlaid wood coffer (10 gp), and a necklace made of electrum (30 gp). The fourth and smallest chest holds 40 gems worth a total of 12,000 gp. There are also several tapestries and paintings taken from the clerics' private rooms, the private dining room and the waiting room. There is a 5% chance each turn for a random encounter here.

**28. Council Chamber:** This room has wood-paneled walls and an elaborate ceiling with large wooden beams. There are two chande-

liers of cut crystal (700 gp each). A large polished wood table stands in the middle of the room with fifteen padded armchairs around it. There are two padded chairs, one to each side of the head chair, each with a small writing table near it. Each place around the table is equipped with an inkwell and pen. There is also a small drawer at each place containing paper or vellum. The drawer at the chair marked Z on the map also contains a scroll of *protection from magic*. There are three paintings on the west wall, works of Ness-uther. One is an excellent rendering of the Scholia in spring, with tiny alpine blossoms on the ground. The other two are arctic winter landscapes. The south wall has a mirror on it. It is a *mirror of life trapping*, measuring 36 by 16 inches, framed in a dark wood. Seven of the Scholia's lawful inhabitants are trapped in the mirror along with five previous victims. The prisoners from the Scholia are described below.

Mondaleth, the High Priest of the Scholia, is a male 9th-level cleric (LN, AC 0, MV 9") hp 52) wearing *splint mail* +4 under his robes, and using a *mace* +3. He wears black robes belted with a silver cord, a black helm, silver hood, sandals, a silver holy symbol (an equilateral triangle within a circle), a ring of keys to the Scholia, a *ring of fire resistance*, and a jade necklace (1600 gp). He also has a scroll with a *heal* spell on it, another scroll containing *sticks to snakes* and *snake charm*, and potions of *extra healing* and *levitation*. His spells are *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds* (x 2), *protection from evil*, *sanctuary*, *chant*, *hold person* (x 2), *resist fire*, *silence* 15' radius, *spiritual hammer*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *prayer*, *cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*, and *flame strike*. He is the perfect diplomat: optimistic, pious, and perceptive, yet cautious and always devoted to the service of Ptah.

Nythel, the Master of Combat, is a male 6th-level ranger (NG, AC 0, MV 12") wearing *chain mail* +5, and trained in bastard sword, scimitar, and short bow. His *vorpal bastard sword* +3 is in the armory,-but he has a short bow with 10 arrows +1 with him. He wears a *ring of free action*. Nythel is quite fearless, very well spoken, and cheerful.

Be'ezhom, the Master of Magic, is a male elf 5th-level magic-user (LN, AC 4, MV 12", hp 24) wearing *bracers of defense* AC 4 and using a *staff* +1. He carries scrolls of *hold person*, *slow*, and *mirror image* and traveling spell books with the following spells: *burning hands*, *charm person*, *detect magic*, *hold portal*, *light*, *magic missile*, *continual light*, *forget*, *knock*, *levitate*, *web*, *wizard lock*, *blink*, *explosive runes*, *fireball*, *hold person*, and *slow*. His memorized spells are *charm person*, *burning hands*, *hold portal*, *magic missile*, *knock*, and *fireball*. Be'ezhom is the supreme intellectual, always aloof and only concerned with the aesthetic.

Ni'osyl, the Apprentice Master, is a female 4th-level cleric (LN, AC 3, MV 6", hp 25) wearing plate mail and using a *mace* +1. Her spells are *cure light wounds* (x2), *detect evil*, *detect magic*, *sanctuary*, *chant*, *detect charm*, *hold person*, and *spiritual hammer*. She has a psionic ability of 106, attack/defense modes CD/FGHI, and the disciplines of *hypnosis* (2nd level of mastery) and *empathy* (4th level). She is retiring and studious.

Selevona, one of the Scholia's surviving guards, is a female elf 2nd/3rd-level fighter/magic-user (N, AC 5, MV 12", hp 14) wearing elfin chain mail and using a long sword. Her spells are *magic missile*, *sleep*, and *mirror image*. She is curious and moody.

Kilphor, the other guard trapped in the mirror, is a male dwarf 4th-level fighter (NG, AC 2, MV 9") hp 31) wearing *plate mail* +1 and using a *battle axe* +1. He has strength of 18/58, giving him +2 to hit and +3 on damage. He is extremely loyal and very precise.

Besh-roh, the secretary of the Scholia, is a male 2nd-level cleric (LN, AC 4, MV 9") hp 16 [CON 18]), wearing *splint mail* under his robes and using a flail. His spells are *command*, *cure light wounds* (x 2) and *sanctuary*. He is loyal, trustworthy, and very dedicated to Mondaleth.

The other prisoners of the *mirror* are not affiliated with the Scholia. Seelohnor Delohvra, a female elf 11th-level magic-user, CN, was a fellow apprentice of Oolay'ah's master before her betrayal by Oolay'ah. Geskhy'-ged-Ethrah, a male 5th-level fighter, LE, was a former consort of Oolay'ah, displaced by Karlekh. Mylo'omha, a male 4th-level cleric, NG, was already a prisoner of the *mirror* when Oolay'ah acquired it. He can be used by the DM as a connection

with "ages past." Ghanorlah-ben-Thylorh-mah-Lanoorha, a female 6th-level cleric, CE (worships a death goddess, Tuonetar, from *Legends & Lore*, page 56)) is the true heir to the Lanoorha-Tis. She is Oolay'ah's only older half-sister. Her disappearance rekindled the long-standing feud with the Thylorh clan to its present bloody height. Selthor'ah-mah-Lanoorha, a female 5th-level illusionist, LE, is one of Oolay'ah's many younger half-sisters. She tried to assassinate Oolay'ah but was betrayed by Karlekh, then her lover, who later became Oolay'ah's consort. If any of them are released from the *mirror*, the DM may fill these NPCs out as desired.

There is a 2% chance per turn for a random encounter in this room.

**29. Library:** This large room holds many bound volumes and scrolls, all stored in rows of shelves. There are also two writing desks and several reading stands. For each turn the PCs spend searching the shelves of scrolls, there is a 20% chance to find scrolls of *purify water* and *cure serious wounds*. There is also a 2% cumulative chance per turn to find a  *tome of understanding* and a additional 2% cumulative chance to find a volume dealing with the Sept of Infamy. A brief perusal of this volume is sufficient to explain who "the Tis" is. There is a 5% chance per turn for a random encounter here.

**30. Laboratory:** This octagonal chamber with a peaked roof is a tower which extends above the upper level. It holds three long work tables covered with equipment and several stools. There is a small bookcase along one wall. The equipment includes balances and bottles, vials and phials, jars and flasks, cauldrons and crucibles, mortar and pestle, and any number of containers of herbs and other less natural items. Several scrolls are scattered about but none of them, nor any of the books, are magical. The binding of one book is labeled "Third Level Spells." It has been prepared for the inscription of spells but remains empty. If any of the concoctions on the tables are disturbed, there is a 45% chance for either creating a potion of *healing* or an explosion (8' radius) that will cause 3-12 hp damage (save vs. wands for half); equal possibility for either of these results, if one or the other is indicated. There is a 1% chance per turn of a random encounter.

## Cellar level

**31. Dog Stables:** Sixteen large sled dogs are kept here. Treat them as war dogs (AC 6, MV 12", HD 2 + 2; hp 18, 18, 18, 17, 17, 16, 16, 15, 14, 12, 12, 12, 11, 11, 10, 8). They are not trained to fight but, due to their natural tendencies, they are extremely vicious and will attack anyone except their usual trainers if released from their individual kennels. At present, they have not been fed in a week, so they will cower and whine when anyone enters the room, but when released will immediately attack at +1 to hit. Anyone other than their trainers who attempts to harness them must beat them into submission. See the method for subduing dragons in the *Monster Manual*, page 30.

Two sleds are kept in storage room A. Each sleds can be loaded with up to 90 lbs. of equipment and pulled by six dogs at the rate of 15 miles per day. Room B holds crates of meat (dog food), twenty pairs of snowshoes, six pairs of skis and the harnesses for the sleds. An unlit lantern hangs from the middle of the ceiling. The secret door is trapped, causing the gates to the kennels to spring open. The door leads to a steep spiral stairway that connects with the Armory and also the ground floor. The outside door is always barred shut. It will take 12 hp battering damage before bursting. The noise has a 70% chance of alerting Phelakh' and the other guards on duty in the room above.

**32. Hallway:** There is a 5% chance per turn of a random encounter here.

**33. Crypt:** The doorway to this room is guarded by a *glyph of warding* that will deliver 18 hp fire damage to anyone who blunders in to it. The room itself has an arched ceiling of 4'7". There is an

altar at the far end of the room which will deliver 12 hp cold damage to any chaotic character who touches it. A secret compartment in the altar holds altar cloths and a silver lamp (15 gp). A small flask holds oil for the lamp. There are four rows of eight niches on each side of the room. Many of them contain a skeleton wrapped in moldy and decayed cloths. One of the empty niches (third from the bottom at the location marked on the map) has a secret door at its end. It opens, if merely pushed, onto a passage that leads to Room 42. The secret passage is only 3' high and 2' wide.

The DM should play up the possibility that there are undead in this room (crypts *always* seem to have undead in them). Odd sounds (actually caused by the wind), strange smells (as one would expect in a crypt), and other odds and ends can serve the heighten the suspense here. Of course, no undead are here at all.

**34. Junior Dormitory:** The door to this room is locked. The room contains 12 bunk beds, 24 small chests under the beds, and several wooden benches. There are rough woolen hangings on the walls. The beds have a few sleeping furs. Each chest contains the few personal items allowed by the Scholia, any other items the student wishes to keep hidden, two changes of clothing, a chant book, and a saffron robe with a black cord.

There are 28 students cowering in the room: human, elf, half-elf and halfling, ages from 15-18 (all 0 level or 1 HD, hp 1-6, AC 10, MV 12"). The students have been terrorized by Oolay'ah, and most are too much in shock to even describe the Sept members. Only one, the Baron's daughter Dhol (5 hp), can provide any information: Something has happened to the clerics of the Scholia; she has only seen one recently, and he seemed to be in a trance; there are three women of some tiger cult, one called "Oolie the Tis"; Oolie has brought horrors from the caves beyond the baths into the Scholia; and, they keep taking people away who never return.

**35. Senior Dormitory:** This door also has a lock, but it has been opened. The beds have all been pushed together in one end of the room. The other end of the room now contains a makeshift torture chamber. Present are two students, Tal and Yannah (O-level humans), and a 1st-level cleric, Volneff, all suffering from severe torture. The teachings of Loviatar require her followers to administer pain as often as possible to other beings in a ritualistic fashion, and Oolay'ah is dedicated to her cult teachings.

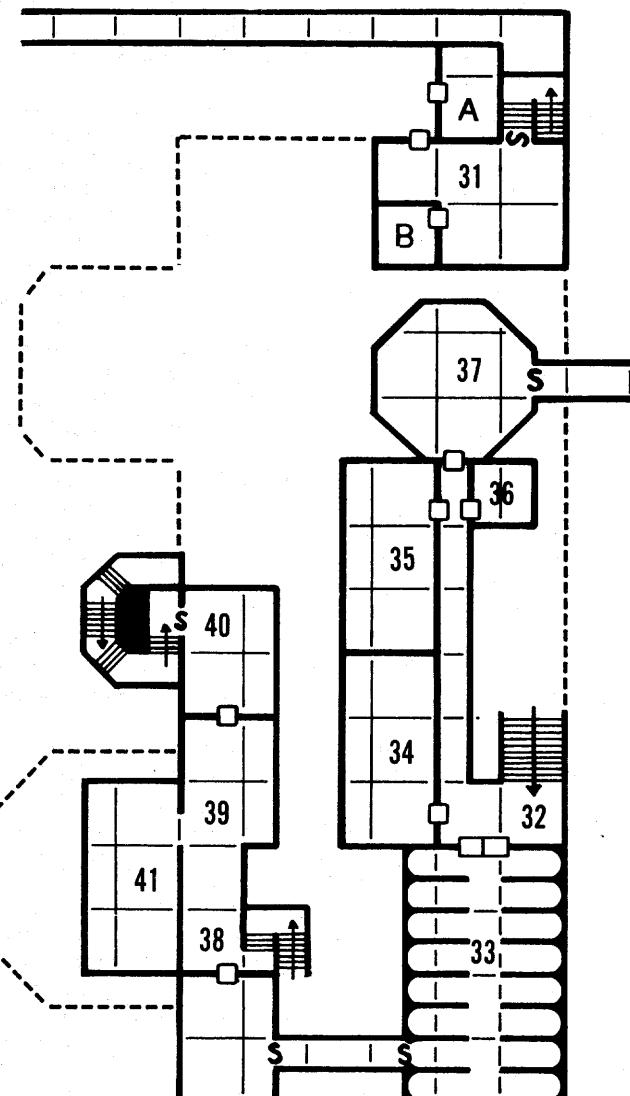
Gildah, Master of Healing, has thus far managed to avoid capture. He slinks around trying to ease the pains of Oolay'ah's victims. He is a 6th-level cleric (LN, AC 7, MV 12", hp 32) wearing a black robe belted with a silver cord (he wears no armor in order to avoid noise during his stealthy missions of mercy), a *ring of protection* +3, and a *ring of invisibility*. He uses a staff. He carries scroll of *cure serious wounds* and *neutralize poison*, and three potions of *healing*. His spells are *cure light wounds* (x3), *purify food and drink*, *resist cold*, *hold person*, *slow poison*, *detect charm*, *know alignment*, *resist fire*, *cure blindness*, *cure disease*, and *remove curse*. He will first speak in dwarf to test the PCs' loyalties. He is precise, cautious, and an extreme pacifist; as a result, he is not interested in combating Oolay'ah, only in healing. He does know that the invaders have a lair beyond the hot springs.

**36. The Square Classroom:** This room normally serves as a meditation area for the students. Plain rugs cover the floor. There are no other furnishings. There are 20 giant centipedes loose in the room, brought here by the Sept (AC 9, MV 15", HD 1/4, #AT 1, poison).

**37. The Octagonal Classroom:** This room is outfitted as a combat practice area. Along the walls are racks of weapons of various kinds including those not used by clerics — all the students are not necessarily destined for the cleric class. Most of the weapons are only for practice, thus they will have dull edges, rounded points, or will be made of wood instead of metal; however, there are a matched set of four scimitars, each with gems inset on the hilt: carnelian (6 x 50 gp), zircon (5 x 50 gp), rhodochrosite (12 x 10 gp), and tourmaline (3 x 100 gp). The set of scimitars (together valued at 1200 gp) is the property of Manorlah.

## Map 5 Cellar Level

One square = 10 feet



There are also a pair of tigers in the room, beloved pets of the Lanoorha-Tis (tigers: AC 6, MV 12") HD 5 + 5, hp 42, 36, #AT 3, DAM 2-5/2-5/1-10, special attack). Note that if one is killed, the other will attack at +2 to hit. There are several skeletons (the bodies of dead torture victims) scattered about the room.

The secret door is actually a revolving wall, covered with a huge rack of staves, clubs, and padded maces. One of the staves has a metallic tip, and is placed in the rack with the metal tip up. If removed from the rack and replaced, with the metal tip down and fitting into a special socket, the door is activated by magic and makes a 90-degree turn. Removing the staff entirely causes the door to rotate back into position. The secret door is wooden, and weighs about 800 lbs.

**38, 39, 40, 41. Storage Rooms:** The storage space in Room 38 is used for cloth, clothing, wood, torches, oil, etc. Any type of robe used by the Scholia can be found here. If these are used by the PCs for disguise, it will add two to their surprise rolls. Any disguise will

also keep any escaped prisoners the PCs may encounter from immediately fleeing.

The shelves in Room 39 contain staples such as salt, sugar, potatoes, beans, etc. Large casks in the middle of the room hold water, grain and flour. A huge spider lurks among the stores, brought here by the Tis (spider: AC 6, MV 18", HD 2 + 2, hp 13, #AT 1, DAM 1-6, poison).

Room 40 is the cold storage room. Large shelves on the walls hold cheeses, dried apples, etc. Large pieces of slated or smoked meats hang from hooks in the ceiling. There is a secret door to a stairway that leads up to Rooms 24 and 30.

Room 41 is the wine cellar. Liquors and wines are stored here in all sizes of containers from small liter kegs to huge casks. Roll 2d4 to determine the nature of any beverage tested. A result of 2 indicates a beverage that has become foul; there is only a 35% chance for the tester to detect this. If drunk, the tester will suffer stomach cramps for d4 + 2 turns if a save vs. poison fails. The indulger attacks at -2 and save at -1 during the course of the effects. A result of 3 or 4 indicates a highly intoxicating distilled beverage; a mere sip will be enough to inflict great intoxication within two rounds (see *DMG*, pages 82-83). A result of 5-7 indicates a normal ale, wine, or distilled liquor with no special effects. A result of 8 indicates an herbal distillate which can heal 1-2 hp of damage once per day, but which will slightly intoxicate each indulger. The same beverage is also found in smaller quantities in Room 3.

There is a 5% cumulative chance per turn the PCs spend in the storage rooms for a random encounter to occur.

**42. Storage Room:** The walls of this room are covered with shelves containing jars and sealed boxes of every imaginable kind of preserved food, from asparagus to zucchini. There are some cracks in one corner of the wall that have recently allowed a group of 12 stirges access to this room. They will begin entering the room one turn after the characters do. First six stirges will enter, then two each round thereafter (AC 8, MV 3"/18", HD 1 + 1; hp 9, 9, 9, 8, 8, 7, 7, 7, 6, 6, 4, 3; #AT 1, DAM 1-3, blood drain).

## The labyrinth

The residents of the Scholia many years ago constructed two passages leading to the hot springs (from rooms 37 and 11). Both are smoothly carved, with a floor leveled by the passage of time and many feet. The remainder of the underground construction was recently finished by six dwarves with Oolay'ah's guidance and "encouragement." These passages are only 5' wide and typically follow fissures that lead from one natural cave to another through the limestone cliffs. In many places, only minor work was needed to make the passages passable.

As the PCs move through the labyrinth, there is a 30% chance each turn for them to encounter a natural obstacle. Roll a d10 to select an obstacle:

A result of 1-4 indicates ice covering a 20-50' length of passage. While in this area, each character must save vs. dexterity on a d20 each round or slip and fall, suffering 1-4 hp damage. There is also a 60% chance of the character sliding into the walls of the passage for 2-5 additional hp damage.

A result of 5 indicates a crevice, 1-5' wide and 10-40' deep. To successfully jump over a crevice, each character must save vs. dexterity on a d20, at -2 for each foot of width less than five.

A result of 6-7 indicates falling rocks that will bombard the PCs for 2-16 hp damage apiece, save vs. petrification for no damage.

A result of 8-10 indicates a concealed pit, 10' deep with a spiked bottom. The first two characters in line must save vs. the average of their intelligence and dexterity on a d20 or fall in. Those who fall in suffer falling damage of 1-6 hp, plus damage from the spikes of 2-8 hp; the spikes do half damage to any character who saves vs. dexterity and has an armor class of 5 or better.

The rooms near the Shrine were also based on the shape of natural caverns, but were roughly finished to more regular, square shapes. Hence the ceilings of these rooms will be natural, but the walls and floors will be fairly squared off.

## Labyrinth random encounter tables

There is a 15% chance for a random encounter each turn. To select an encounter, roll a d6. Only encounters 5 and 6 may be repeated.

### Roll Result

1 Five members of the Sept, finished with some business, are returning to the Scholia for guard duty. The first is a female 4th-level fighter (NE, AC 2, MV 9", hp 43 [CON 17]) wearing *splint mail* +1 and shield, and using a *long sword* +1. Her strength of 17 gives her +1 to hit and damage. She wears a *ring of free action*, a *ring of warmth*, and a gold earring (20 gp).

Next is a male 3rd-level fighter (CE, AC 5, MV 9", hp 21) wearing chain mail, and using a short bow with five *arrows* +1 and a bastard sword. His strength of 18/62 gives him +2 to hit and +4 on damage. He wears an anklet of silver set with four obsidians (45 gp).

The third is a female 4th-level cleric (LE, AC 5, MV 9", hp 27) wearing chain mail and using a mace. Her strength of 16 gives her +1 on damage. Her spells are *chant*, *hold person*, *silence 15' radius*, *spiritual hammer*, *bless*, *command*, *cure light wounds*, *light*, and *sanctuary*. She has a *potion of speed* and wears a gold earring with two alexandrites (165 gp).

Fourth is a female 3rd-level illusionist (CE, AC 4 [DEX 16], MV 12", hp 16 [CON 16]) wearing *bracers of defense* AC 6 and using a *dagger* +1. Her spells are *color spray*, *wall of fog*, and *blindness*. She has a scroll of *hallucinatory terrain* and wears a silver pendant (11 gp).

The last guard is a male 3rd-level assassin (CE, AC 3 [DEX 17], MV 12", hp 14) wearing leather armor and using a short sword and two daggers. He uses poison on the short sword which takes 1-6 rounds to take effect, delivering 5-20 hp of damage at the rate of 5 hp per round (save vs. poison at +2 for no damage). He has a tiny silver pillbox of exquisite workmanship (25 gp).

2 Three members of the Sept are bringing a prisoner from the Scholia to prepare for the next ritual. The first guard is a male 4th-level cleric (LE, AC 3, MV 9", hp 30) wearing *splint mail*, a *ring of protection* +1, and using a *mace* +1. His spells are *bless*, *cure light wounds*, *light*, *resist cold*, *sanctuary*, *hold person*, *chant*, *resist fire*, and *spiritual hammer*. He has a scroll of *dispel magic* and wears an armband of hammered gold (22 gp) on his tunic.

The second guard is a female 2nd-level cleric (LE, AC 5, MV 9", hp 13) wearing chain mail and using a flail. Her strength of 17 gives her +1 to hit and damage. Her spells are *bless*, *command*, *protection from good*, and *remove fear*. She has a silver earring with a single jasper (53 gp).

The third guard is a male 3rd-level magic-user (CE, AC 5, MV 12", hp 9) wearing a *ring of protection* +3 (DEX 16), and using a *staff* +2. His spells are *charm person*, *magic missile*, and *web*. He has a scroll of *gust of wind* and *protection from normal missiles*, and wears an anklet of three braided strands of silver (15 gp) and a brooch of jet in a gold setting (120 gp).

The prisoner (O-level halfling, 2 hp) wears mere rags and has no spells. Her name is Lyrha (see area 25).

3 A homonculous lurks in the labyrinth (AC 6, MV 6"/18", HD 2, hp 11, #AT 1, DAM 1-3, bite causes sleep). If it is killed, Oolay'ah will suffer 2-20 hp of damage.

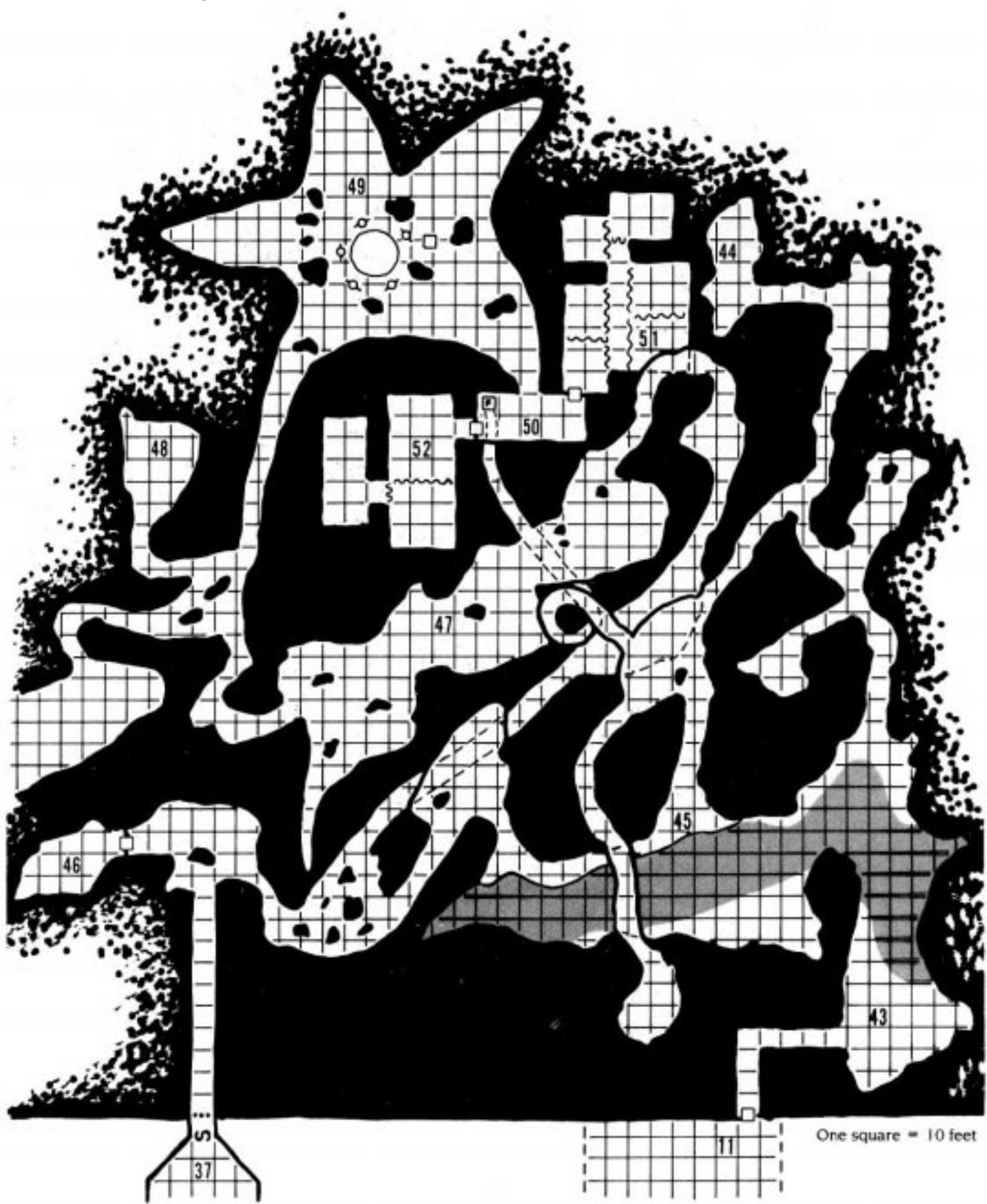
4 A caterwaul prowls the labyrinth (AC 3, MV 18" (24" in bursts), HD 4 + 2, hp 22, #AT 3 (twice each round), DAM 1-4/1-4/1-6, special attack, special defense). It is friendly only with Sept members.

5 Three to twelve piercers will be encountered in the next cavern entered (AC 3, MV 1") HD 1-4, #AT 1, DAM 1-6 per HD, 95% chance to surprise).

6 A colony of yellow mold is discovered growing on the walls and floor of a passage or cavern (AC 9, MV 0", #AT 1, DAM 1-8, special attack, special defense).

# Map 6

## The Labyrinth



**43. The Hot Springs:** The passage from the refectory opens into a large natural cavern. The ceiling height varies from around 6' at the edges to 40' in the center. The ground slopes gradually down into water from which steam rises. Natural hot springs issue into this cavern through small inlets off to the left. For this reason, the water becomes hotter as one moves in that direction. At the edge of the water, the characters will see a few rocky projections out in the water before the steam closes in to obstruct the view of the far side of the cavern. To cross the stepping stones successfully, each character must save against his dexterity on a d20 at +2. Anyone who falls into the water will only get a dousing (2% chance of 1-4 hp battering damage) as the water is merely warm at this point.

When the PCs reach the far side, they will see another shelflike area. Ahead, it narrows to another more roughly hewn passage. To the left, a narrow shelf continues until it disappears into the steam. At this point, there is another set of stepping stones. Anyone who falls off this set of stones will suffer 1-6 hp damage as the water here is quite hot. This set leads to another shelf area, but there are no exits here.

**44. Caterwaul Lair:** This rather small cave is the lair of the caterwaul from the labyrinth random encounters table. It is littered with rags, scraps of mosses, etc. The walls are covered with raking scratch marks where the caterwaul has honed its claws. If searched for a turn, the following items will be found: a *potion of strength*, 15 arrows +1, a necklace of gold (85 gp), and six gems. If searched longer, the following additional items will be located: a *potion of extra healing*, a *ring of feather falling*, a *wand of magic detection*, two earrings of silver (4 gp each), and six more gems. The bodies of three students are here; they had attempted to enter the caverns to fight the Sept (with much of the above equipment), but were slain in the process.

If the caterwaul was not encountered in the labyrinth, it will certainly be found here.

**45. The Ledge:** The passageway opens out into a large cavern with steam rising from the water. The surface of water can just be seen about 20' below. At first, it may seem that this is a dead end, but an observant character will see that a ledge continues along to the right. The ledge is narrow enough that the PCs must negotiate it carefully in single file. It is so slippery with condensation from the steam that each character must save vs. his dexterity on a d20 at +1 to avoid falling off. If someone does slip off into the scalding water below, he will receive 2-8 hp damage per round of immersion in this, the hottest end of the hot springs. If a rope is lowered to rescue someone, they must save vs. the average of their strength and constitution on a d20 or be too weak to hold on until raised to safety.

If the characters are roped together, a single character who slips will be safe. If two slip, there is a 25% chance to pull another off the ledge. If three slip, there is a 55% chance to pull two further characters off. If more than half the party is pulled off, the remaining characters must all have strengths of 16 or better in order to keep the entire group from sliding into the boiling water.

**46. Slave Pen:** The entrance to this cave is hidden by a *phantasmal force* spell and appears to be a dead end. The door itself is also *wizard locked*. Inside the cave are the six fur trappers whom Oolay'ah deceived and captured. Oolay'ah has had them beaten several times; since she is a lycanthrope, she is particularly enraged with their occupation. Recently, the dwarves have been left in the room without food, so they are fairly weak by now. Water does trickle down one wall of the cave; otherwise, they would be unconscious. One of the dwarves is Kaftikel, a 4th-level fighter (N, AC 10, MV 3" [due to weakness], hp 22 [down to 9 now], trained in short sword, hand axe, and light crossbow. His armor and other belongings are in Area 48. The other dwarves are all semi-comatose (1 hp each). Kaftikel will offer to go with the party and lead them to where he presumes the Sept leaders will be. He and the other dwarves know the construction of the Labyrinth only too intimately, but do not know to what use the rooms they built have been put.

**47. Cavern of Vortices:** This cavern is extremely large, with an

irregular ceiling varying from 15-40' high. There are many stalactites and stalagmites, several of which connect to form huge pillars. As soon as the PCs enter this cavern, any torches they have will be blown out. Lanterns will flicker sharply, creating strong shadows which will interfere with the PCs' ability to fight (-1 to hit). There are four vortices in here. They will automatically surprise the party (vortices: AC 0, MV 15", HD 2 + 2; hp 14, 12, 11, 9; special attack).

The vortices were summoned by Oolay'ah in a special ceremony, and will not attack any Sept member.

**48. Refuse Pile:** This small cave has several piles of rubble and other refuse. If examined more closely (40% chance), equipment including armor, weapons, and clothing belonging to the party of dwarves can be seen. The items include fur coats, snow shoes, packs with rations, torches, and traps of various sizes. There is also a set of *chain mail* +1 sized for a dwarf, a *hand axe* +1, other weapons (short swords, axes, and hammers), and a light crossbow with 10 bolts.

**49. Shrine:** The final 6' of the passage leading to the shrine are covered by a *continual darkness* spell. The door to the shrine itself is *wizard locked*. There is an 80% chance to encounter Oolay'ah's homonculous here (unless found in the labyrinth; see labyrinth random encounters table). If not, it will be with Oolay'ah.

The shrine, the largest of the caverns, is shaped roughly like a five-pointed star, with several pillars of stone supporting the roof. The roof height varies from 6-20'. Two natural chimneys over the center of the cavern allow smoke from the numerous torches to escape. A crude, circular altar stands in the center, surrounded by five braziers and dressed with ivory-colored cloths. A brass stand nearby supports a large bell. When the characters enter, Oolay'ah and her lieutenants are gathered around the altar, waiting for a new sacrifice to be brought down from the Scholia. There are five members of the Sept gathered in the room, six if Loorha has managed to separate herself from the PCs. Note that if either Loorha is present or if the homonculous has encountered the party, Oolay'ah and the other Sept members will not be surprised. In this case, there is a 25% chance that one of the random encounter groups not previously encountered will also be present as reinforcement (encounter group #1 would be best). Random encounter group #2, the one with the prisoner, may enter this area several melee rounds after the party arrives and begins combat with those present.

The first and most important of the Sept members present is Oolay'ah-ben-Ethrah-man-Lanoorha-Tis, a female 9th-level magic-user and weretiger (LE, AC 4 [3 in weretiger form], MV 12", wearing *bracers of defense* AC 4 and using a *dagger* +2. She can be hit only by +1 or better weapons. She can change at will to weretiger form, in which case she has the following attacks: #AT 3, DAM 1-4/1-4/1-2 (rake with hind paws when both forepaws hit for DAM 2-5/2-5). Her spells are *charm person*, *hold portal*, *shocking grasp*, *spider climb*, *darkness 15' radius*, *mirror image*, *strength*, *fireball*, *haste*, *protection from normal missiles*, *dimension door*, *fire shield*, and *animate dead*. She carries scrolls of *jump*, *sleep*, *web*, and *fly*. She is extremely haughty, arrogant, and suspicious, and can be rather moody and quite vengeful. In battle, she is fearless and somewhat sadistic. Oolay'ah wears a simple fillet of two intertwined bands of platinum (800 gp), rings of gold on each finger (eight rings worth 30 gp each), also two thumb rings with pearls (115 gp each) and a nose ring of red and yellow gold (65 gp). She has a wildcat, Ootis, for a familiar (AC 5, MV 18", hp 4, #AT 3, DAM 1-2/1-2/1-2, rear claws DAM 1-2/1-2, surprise 1-4). His intelligence is 4, and he adds 4 hp to Oolay'ah when within 12". Loviatar allowed Oolay'ah to retain her lawful evil alignment when she gained lycanthropy, but Oolay'ah's spells can only be used in human form.

Karlekh-tel-Anathrah-Lanoorha-Dohl is Oolay'ah's current consort. He is a male 6th-level cleric (LE, AC 1, MV 6", hp 38) wearing splint mail, a *ring of protection* +3, and using a *mace* +1. His spells are *cause light wounds* (x 2), *cure light wounds* (x 2), *sanctuary*, *hold person*, *obscure alignment*, *silence 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *spiritual hammer*, *continual darkness*, *animate dead*, and *prayer*. He is fanatical and scheming, but capricious, abrasive, and

quite immoral. Karlekh wears a *brooch of shielding* and has a scroll of *feign death*, an earring of gold with a topaz (520 gp) and a silver necklace with an ivory pendant shaped like a hand holding a dagger (225 gp).

The third Sept member is Sahlay'rha-tel-Ethrah, a male 5th-level illusionist (CE, AC 4, MV 12", hp 14) wearing a *ring of protection* +2, a *ring of fire resistance*, and using a staff. His spells are *color spray*, *darkness*, *hypnotism*, *wall of fog*, *hypnotic pattern*, *mirror image*, and *spectral force*. Sahlay'rha is bored and looking for action.

Manorlah-mah-Lanoorha-Zel is Oolay'ah's heir-apparent, a female 8th-level fighter (LE, AC 3, MV 12", hp 69, #AT 3/2) wearing chain mail, *boots of striding and leaping*, a *ring of free action*, and using a *scimitar* +1 and a *dagger* +2. She has a psionic ability of 258, attack/defense modes B/FH, and the disciplines of *domination* (8th level of mastery), *mind over body* (6th level), *teleportation* (4th level), and *aura alteration* (2nd level). She has two *ioun stones*: a pearly white spindle which allows her to regenerate 1 hp per turn, and a burned out dull grey sphere which adds 10 psionic ability points, giving her a total of 268. She wears a medallion of three small sapphires and gold (1700 gp) and a gold buckle with an eye of jade (190 gp).

Her twin is Neshay'loo-mah-Lanoorha, a female 5th-level fighter (NE, AC 3, MV 12", hp 52) wearing *chain mail* +2, and using a *bastard sword* +2. She has a standard *ring of regeneration*, and wears a silver necklace (38 gp) and a ring of gold with a chrysoberyl set in a platinum hawk's head (300 gp). The twins, Manorlah and Neshay'loo, are violent, cruel, and hot tempered. Both are extremely avaricious and lusty, but in battle are quite brave though careless.

The sixth Sept member is Koptekh-bel-Anathrah, a male 4th-level fighter (NE, AC 5, MV 9", hp 29) wearing chain mail, a *ring of protection* +1, and using a *battle axe* +1. He has +1 to hit and damage. He wears an anklet of gold (25 gp) and an earring of silver with a single citrine (65 gp). Koptekh is cold and brutal, with an aloof manner.

If the battle goes against the Sept, they will retreat into the robing room, attempt to bar the door with *hold portal*, escape by means of the secret tunnel, and return to the Scholia. Once there, they will regroup, gather reinforcements from the random parties not yet encountered, and prepare an ambush for the PCs near the refectory. The DM should carefully time the movement of both the Sept party and the PC party during this disengagement period. If the characters do manage to decimate the Sept in a further battle, Oolay'ah, Karlekh, and Manorlah, if alive, will cut their losses and run.

**50. Robing Room:** This small room contains a large wardrobe holding robes and other paraphernalia for the rites of Loviatar. Shelves to the left of the door hold several daggers, bowls, two candlesticks, a lamp, a tray, and several bells, all of gold. These items are worth 1200 gp, but good clerics will sense that these infamous tools of a vile belief should be melted down, and the proceeds from the sale of the gold (only 800 gp) given to a deserving temple. There are thirty robes of various styles in the wardrobe, ranging from two very elaborate ones, belonging to Karlekh and Oolay'ah, to more simple ones.

If the lamp on the shelf is examined and shaken, a rattling sound will indicate the presence of something inside. It is in fact only a small stone, though greedy PCs may be led to think it is a gem. Anyone who opens the lamp will trigger a *fire trap*. The resulting explosion delivers  $9 + 1d4$  hp damage to all within a 5' radius (save vs. spells for half).

In the floor of one corner of the room is a secret trap door which leads to a passage ending in a steep spiral. At the top of the spiral is a dead-end wall, painted like stone but made of thick paper, which can easily be broken through as an escape route.

**51. Sept Dormitory:** This large irregularly-shaped, rough-carved room is the living quarters for ten members of the Sept. It is divided by silk hangings into five sleeping areas and a small common area. The floor of the common area has an exotic rug (300 gp) with several large pillows scattered about. An oil lamp hangs from a chain

attached to the ceiling. The first three sleeping chambers each have a set of bunk beds (stolen from the Scholia, as was nearly everything else in this area). The last two each have a double bed. Packs, clothing, and other personal articles are scattered about in all the areas. If the PCs search the room thoroughly (requiring 30 minutes), the following items of value will be found: 12 gems worth 950 gp, three jeweled ornamental daggers (30 gp each), a scroll of *protection from lycanthropes* (owned by someone who doesn't trust Oolay'ah), a *cursed scroll* (which will *polymorph* the reader into a monster of equal level that will attack any creatures nearby), and a potion of *longevity*.

**52. Secret Lair:** This is Oolay'ah's secret hideaway. Eight of Oolay'ah's cats are scattered about the room. They will attack only if Oolay'ah personally directs them (cats: AC 6, MV 3", 1/2 HD, hp 1-4, #AT 2, DAM 1-2/1 (rear claws for DAM 1-2), surprise 1-3). The first and larger room is divided by a silk hanging into two sections. One is a comfortably appointed lounging area with three divans and a low round table, obviously taken out of the Scholia. A silver tray holds several small flasks of liqueurs and a small bowl of fungus reputed to have hallucinogenic power.

Beyond the silk hanging, which depicts arcane runes and other symbols, is Oolay'ah's study. There are several work tables covered with equipment for magical research, a writing desk, and a pentagram drawn on the floor. A secret drawer in the desk, holding Oolay'ah's spell books, is *wizard locked*. The cover of the second volume is trapped with *explosive runes*. An explosion in the desk will destroy all the books. The spell books contain all of the spells Oolay'ah has memorized, plus the following: *comprehend languages*, *dancing lights*, *Nystul's magic aura*, *message*, *mending*, *unseen servant*, *locate object*, *fool's gold*, *scare*, *blink*, *charm monster*, *clairaudience*, *dispel magic*, *slow*, *fire trap*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *wall of force*, and *passwall*.

Another silk hanging separates Oolay'ah's sleeping chamber from the first room. A large bed covered with silk bedding and sleeping furs fills most of the room. A small book is concealed in the bed; it is Oolay'ah's private diary, and contains the details of her plan to invade the Scholia and loot it of all its varied treasures (and perhaps turn the Scholia into the new home for the Sept, too). There are also lists of genealogical tables pertaining to the Lanoorha lineage, and detailed descriptions and appraisals of its Regalia (royal treasures). One final page has the following information:

- 1 *Be'ezhom*
- 2 *Seelohnor Delohvra*
- 3 *Nythel*
- 4 *Besh-roh*
- 5 *Kilphor*
- 6 - - -
- 7 *Geskhy'-ged-Ethrah*
- 8 —
- 9 *Selevona*
- 10 *Mylo'omha*
- 11 *Ni'osyl*
- 12 *Mondaleth*
- 13 *Ghanorlah-ben-Thylorh-mah-Lanoorha*
- 14 *Selthor'ah-mah-Lanoorha*
- 15 —

*By the maleficent wrath of Lhachthuss, I, \_\_\_\_\_ command \_\_\_\_\_ the occupant of cell \_\_\_\_\_ to come forth!*

Clever players will associate these writings with the *mirror of life trapping* in area 28.

Opposite the bed is a large wardrobe, containing Oolay'ah's personal clothing. A chest, trapped with a poison needle (save vs. poison or die), holds coins: 12,000 cp, 7000 sp, 4000 gp, 15,000 ep, and 900 pp. A secret compartment in the lid holds 25 gems worth a total of 14,250 gp. A scroll case in the corner behind the chest holds four scrolls: a magic-user scroll with *ice storm*, *blink*, and *flame arrow*; a magic-user scroll of *airy water*; a cleric scroll

of true seeing and sticks to snakes; and a druid scroll of summon insects, entangle, and pass without trace.

A secret compartment in the back of the wardrobe conceals some of the Regalia of the Lanoorha Clan. Over the years, each Lanoorha-Tis has added to the Regalia. With her gains from the assault on the Scholia, Oolay'ah seeks to top even the Orb of Lanoorha in extravagance. The Orb of Lanoorha is a gold sphere with platinum bands, encrusted with gems worth 18,000 gp. The Coronet of Lesh is made of silver with five gems (fire opal, oriental topaz, sapphire, diamond, and jacinth) worth 16,000 gp. The Rod of Lyreth is jade with electrum ends (2500 gp). The secret compartment also holds an ivory statue of the Pain-Giver worth 1400 gp.

#### Concluding the adventure

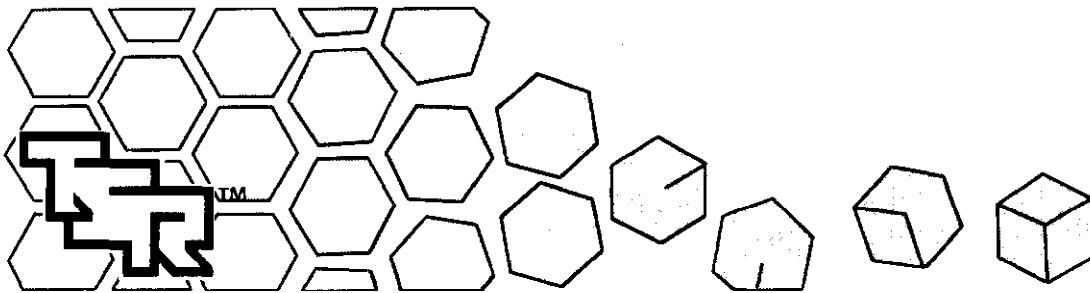
After the party has dealt with the Lanoorha-Tis, all may not be over. There may still be further members of the Sept lurking around (any of the remaining random encounter groups who did not become involved in the final battle). Once the PCs have

discovered Oolay'ah's private diary, they are free to release Mondaleth, *et. al.*, from the depths of the *mirror of life trapping*.

Mondaleth will, of course, be grateful for the restoral of the Scholia, and will wish to reward the party well, both with any spells they might need (*healing, remove curse, exorcise*, and even *raise dead*) and with 5000 gp or the equivalent and 10,000 gp in gems from the Scholia treasury. He will also permit the adventurers to keep any booty they may have gained from the members of the Sept of Infamy. However, he will not allow the removal of any of the Scholia's furnishings or remaining treasure, nor the removal of the personal items of any of its residents (weapons, spell books, etc.). He will attempt to prevent this to the limit of his power and that of his staff.

Mondaleth puts the offer of the Baron of Lesser Nhollia under consideration, but must consult both with Ptah and his superiors before any response can be given. If the PCs are not overly greedy and don't attempt to pillage the Scholia, they will have gained a valuable ally in Mondaleth of Silverthorne and a welcome base for further adventures in the Frozen Lands.





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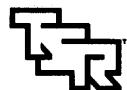
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he Venerable Alan is dead. In the Halls of the King they have summoned the bards to sing the lay of life, to tell the tales of his many long years. What tales they will tell, I can guess. There is one, however, which they will tell, and tell with only part of the truth. And that is the founding tale. We have become a revered Order, now. We have become wise men, counselors, respected lords. There was a time when the title "wizard" was not applied to our kind. There was a time when we were labeled conjurers, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and worse. We were held in little respect, and much fear. It was not then as it is now. I have seen the lifetime of two kings. We are a long-lived Order. The Venerable Alan had seen the reign of two more kings than I. They love him now, and they mourn him.

Come to me, and sit close. Draw up your stools and benches. Heat your ale, and find a place of comfort. The tale I would tell you is one that I know you have not heard. The tale I would tell you is one the bards chose long ago to embroider and make more suitable to these times.

Are you comfortable? Is your ale warm? Listen, then, and I will tell you the tale of The Venerable Alan and The Wizard's Boy.

I did not become a wizard in the usual way. There was, in the time of my own youth, no Seeking, no itinerant wizard sweeping through the villages and castles in great pomp and mystery to choose among the young children for those who might be considered for wizard's teaching. Things, in my youth, were very much different. There was no Order. There were, at that time, but few wizards, and they were named sorcerers, and spoken of with fear and scorn.

First I was a thief. I was the son of a thief, and had to my credit the teachings of a father who ended his own long career upon the gibbet. I was privileged to attend that death. It was not I who considered it a privilege, but the folk of the town who finally caught and hanged him. It was in their minds, I think, to draw for me a lesson in the ending of a thief's life. It was a harsh lesson, and one which stayed with me ever.

That is not to say that I never stole again. Indeed, upon leaving behind that wretched town I had nothing but the clothes upon my back, the fraying boots upon my feet, and the admonitions of the townsfolk to go and steal no more.

But I tried. I journeyed ever with the sight of my father, hanging lifeless and ruined upon the gibbet. I knew that I wanted to face no such fate. I wanted no crossroads grave for myself. I knew, as well, that I was poorly equipped for any other career than thievery. We are fatalists as children. We understand the reality of life in a world where power is held by those older and larger than we. I do not wonder that I viewed my prospects with a large degree of cynicism.

Still, the degree and reason for my thievery changed. I stole now 'only what I must. I stole when I could find no work, when I could not beg for my needs. There is no

# The Wizard's Boy

by Nancy Varian Berberick

*Illustrations by Bob Eggleton*

place for a homeless boy of ten years in a world which views strangers with suspicion and mislike. I made attempts at respectability. I would stop in every good-sized town or village, petition innkeepers, stablemen, shopkeepers, for the work which would keep me clothed and housed and fed. I was not often successful, but I was persistent. It was not until I was certain that there would be no work for me that I stole what I needed. It was in such a village that I met Alan.

My boots, which had been frayed and wearing thin at the time of my father's death, had worn through and finally become useless. A morning and an afternoon of seeking employment had served to show me that there was no one in the village who would risk the presence of an unknown boy in his shop or inn. I had begged a few scraps of food and a sip of ale from the baker's wife at the nooning, but it was nearing night now, and my belly was making known to me its need for more. And my feet were sore and gritty with the dust and pebbles which had worked their way through the holes in the soles of my boots. As the sun bled in setting across the western sky, I sneaked, carefully, I thought, into the back of a tanner's shop. There were a pair of soft leather boots there which would nicely fit me. The shop was closed for the evening meal, and I did not think that the tanner would soon return.

I was wrong. I had the boots in my hand, not stopping to put them on, and was making my way back out through the rear of the shop when I was caught.

The tanner, a big, burly man, grabbed for me, missed, and sent up a shout which fair roused the whole of the small village. I ran, pelting through the narrow streets, the tanner and several others who had answered his cry giving chase. I tore past the baker's shop, down an alley, and through the courtyard of the village inn.

Dashing here and there, I made my way toward the inn, thinking to hide myself among the crowd which was surely within. There, I ran up against someone and I was caught.

I thought of nothing for a moment, for I was panicked. I heard my heart pounding in my ears, and surely I wheezed like a bellows for all to hear, for it had been a long run. Big hands grasped my arms. I staggered, for my knees were weak with the effort of the run and with fear. There would be a beating next, and I hoped nothing more.

He shook me, not hard, and not unkindly, but more to get my attention. He had it.

I looked up. Behind me the angry sounds of my pursuit faded. I knew that the tanner and his friends were there, clamoring for me to be turned over to them. I had no thought for them. There was no room for thought of anything but the man who held me.

He was tall, and not so young, but not so old. His robes were an indistinct brown color. Over these he wore a hooded cloak of fine burgundy wool. The hood was thrown back, revealing hair of darkest black, touched in places with grey and long enough to nearly touch his shoulders. His beard was thick and glossy, with more grey in it than his hair. His face, weather worn and craggy, spoke of travel. All this I saw, while trapped by the grip of

his eyes. They kept me with a hold far surer than the grip his hands still had upon my arms. They were black, if they could be given any color, and they were as deep as cavern pools, running still and quiet. I looked into them, and I was lost to all around me.

I felt every secret being plumbed from me. I was convinced that this man was able to see into my most inner places and that nothing could be hidden from that dark regard. For myself, I learned nothing. That gaze which took and inspected every part of me gave nothing back. I might well have sought to use the night sky for a window. And then he spoke.

"Who are you, boy?"

There was gentleness in his voice. His eyes, then, revealed something a little like wonder and more like recognition.

I could do nothing but answer. I told him my name, and he nodded as though I had confirmed information which had already come to him from some other source.

"He stole the boots!" And with the tanner's aggrieved and belligerent cry, I was suddenly back in the real world.

The stranger looked past me then, and regarded those in the courtyard who muttered with uneasy agreement. He reached down, taking the boots which were still clutched in my hand. "These?"

"Aye." The tanner's tone was changing. There was a subtle undertone of fear beneath his word of agreement.

He tossed them to the tanner, who was too startled to catch them and let them fall to the cobbles at his feet.

"They are returned."

The tanner grumbled behind me and muttered of punishment. The hand still upon my shoulder turned me, and I faced my accusers. I thought then that he would turn me over to them, and I began to tremble, for I had no love of beatings. But he did not. He extended his arm so that I was enfolded in the burgundy cloak. I felt the cold nudge of the sword which was sheathed at his side. I knew then that there would be no beating.

The tanner looked about him for the support of his friends. There was none, for they were fading away, looking uncomfortable and making it clear that they would not press the matter. After all, the boots were returned, and they had business to which they should attend.

Alone, the tanner stood his ground a moment longer. His eyes went from the stranger to me, and widened suddenly with something like fear or perhaps understanding. He picked up his boots and hastily left.

"Why did you steal the boots?"

I looked up at him from the haven of his cloak and shrugged. "Mine are worn to useless, m'lord." I did not know that he could rightly claim the title, but I sensed that if he could not claim it by birth, I might so name him and not be far wrong.

He smiled. "So you steal?"

"It was the only way at the time."

"Ah. A pragmatist."

I did not know what that meant, but it did not sound insulting, so I only nodded. He laughed.

"Where do you live, boy?"

"Nowhere, m'lord."

"Your parents?"

"My father is dead this past year. My mother ten years ago."

"I see."

He seemed to consider something, and then nodded as though he had come to a decision. He regarded me closely again, and again I felt that I was swimming in waters too deep for my skill. I began to shake, and tried to stop it. I had little success. When he saw this, his smile deepened.

"I need a servant. But not one who will steal from me."

I lifted my chin at that, and answered far more arrogantly than I would have had I known who he was. "I do not steal if my belly is full, m'lord."

"Or if there are boots upon your feet?" He was amused.

"Aye."

He loosed me then, and I stepped away, but not far. He reached into the pouch which hung at his belt and took out several coins. "Go buy the boots, boy."

I took the coins and stared. They were twice what the boots were worth, and far more riches than I had ever held. Even so, I do not believe that I would have taken them and run. "All of this, m'lord?"

"The tanner will feel well paid for his trouble tonight. Buy them and return to me here."

"Aye, m'lord."

I found the tanner in his shop, alone at his workbench. He was not working, but sitting silently. I paid him with all the coins I had been given, yet he tried to return them, saying that the boots were not for sale.

"But, sir," I said, puzzled by the refusal to sell his wares and by the long, suspicious looks he was giving me from the corners of his eyes. His looks made me shiver. "I offer you twice what the boots are worth."

"Aye, and what do you offer me but conjurer's gild?"

"Conjurer's gild? These? I held out the coins. There was nothing wrong with them that I could see. They were the small square coin of the realm, marked on both sides with the sheaf of wheat which stamped them as good king's coin.

"No, sir, these are good."

"You had them of the —" He stopped, shook his head once, and picked one of the coins from my hand, examining it closely. "You had them of the man in the stable yard?"

"Aye."

He peered more closely at the coin. "Well, it seems sound enough." Squaring his shoulders, he took the rest of the coins. "Very well, then, boy. Take the boots. And take something else."

"What then?" I asked, my hands already stroking the fine, soft leather of the boots which were now mine.

"Take heed, boy. You throw your lot in with a conjurer."

Again I shivered. "How do you know that? My lord seems a right enough man." Still, there was doubt in my mind, cast there by the certainty in his own expression.

"He is a conjurer. We know his kind here. We know his tricks and schemes." The tanner's smile was sour.

"You name him conjurer . . ." I whispered.

"Aye, and that he is. Have a care, boy, that you sell

your soul for more than a pair of boots for your feet."

My soul! The boots grew heavy in my hand. Was that the price of footwear? I remembered his clear dark eyes, the firm, kindly way in which the stranger, now named conjurer, had stood for me against the tanner and his fellows. My soul? I did not think that he was bargaining for my soul. I did not think, then, that he was what the tanner named him. Shrugging and tucking the boots under my arm, I left the tanner to his profit.

Still, the tanner's words were much with me as we began our journeys. Alan did not try to hide his identity from me. Neither did he at once disclose it. It came soon enough. As he wished, I acted as his servant. He did not have a horse, so we traveled on foot. It was not long before I discovered that the tanner's warning held truth: I had fallen in with a conjurer.

There was a night, not long after our association began, when we were camping in the depth of the forest. I had trapped two rabbits for our dinner. The night was chill and wet. It had been raining since the dawn of that cold, grey day, and while Alan skinned my catch, I tried to light a fire from the best of the wet wood that I had gathered.

I had no success with the kindling. The sparks from my flint would leap, arc, and fall to their deaths upon the wet twigs and leaves. After many attempts, my hands stiff and awkward with chill, I cursed roundly.

Alan laid the meat aside, glanced up at me, and smiled from the shadows of the hood which he had drawn over his head against the drizzle. "A strong oath for a lad so young," he said softly.

"Aye, but not strong enough to light a fire," I grumbled.

"It is a wet night. It might be that you ask too much of your flint and tinder, boy."

"I ask it to do only what it should."

"Aye, but not what it can."

I sat back on my heels and tossed the flint aside with an expression of disgust. My anger was, I thought, a good covering for the disappointment which I felt at the prospect of a cold camp and no dinner.

Again Alan smiled. "Let me see if I can help."

I wished him luck, hunkered upon the damp ground, and watched with little hope for a fire this night.

He moved closer to the ring of stones I had fashioned to contain the fire. He rearranged the kindling only a little, then took a small breath.

"A fire," he said softly, and I knew that he was not speaking to me. Neither, I thought, was he speaking to himself, as a man does when reviewing the tasks at hand. "A fire. To warm our meal, to warm our night. A fire for kindly purposes only."

It was as though he asked a boon of someone. I shivered, and the shivering had little to do with the cold or the damp. The warning words of the tanner came into my mind, and I hugged myself against the chill and the advance of fear.

"A fire, bright and hot. A fire for comfort." He lifted his eyes, his gaze passing over me as though I were not there. It traveled high, and I could not but follow where it went, past the heights of the trees, up to the grey and

starless sky. The forest became still around us. The drip and sigh of the drizzle seemed to fade to nothing. The soft rustle of forest creatures, hunting in the night, vanished.

His voice was a sigh. "A fire." My eyes came back to him, and I was not able to see his face now. Shadows had drifted across it, shadows which did not touch his shoulders or the rest of him. And through the shadows I could see the light of his eyes.

Words fell from his lips, now, and they were words which I had never heard before, but which were, in some frightening way, familiar to me.

"*Furr haetu flamma cuman her for thes tima ti wearml Furr! Cuman her!*"

The words spilled from him like silver water. It seemed to me, crouched before the lifeless fire ring, that I could see the words, feel them. I was too frightened now to even shiver. I would make no move at all which might call his attention to me.

"*Furr haetu flamma cuman . . .*" His voice rose, loud and strong, and then fell fully away. There was no echo of his words among the forest trees. He lifted his hands then, and placed them above my little pile of kindling. He left them there, only a scant inch above the wet wood, for a long moment.

Then he moved. Only his hands, but the motion caught my attention and held it. He lifted his hands slowly, as though pulling with them a great weight. His fingers curled, gripping, gripping something I could not see.

"*Furr!*" he said again, his voice a whisper now, and strained. "*Furr, cuman her!*"

And it came. It came first as soft, thin tendrils of smoke. But soon the tendrils thickened, became darker, and at their roots, far down among the larger pieces of wood which I had laid as a base for the fire, flame licked. He raised his hands higher, straining now, and the flame became two, and three, and leaped triumphantly into the night.

There was fire.

Slowly I got to my feet, keeping my eyes ever upon the enchanted flame. I thought of flight, I thought of bolting through the wet forest, running until I became lost, running until he could no longer find me or my soul.

But I did not run. I did not run because he fell back upon his heels, bringing his hands, the hands which had only seconds ago worked sorcery, up to cover his face.

"Sorcerer," I whispered. It was not an accusation, and I was sorry that it sounded like one once spoken.

He dropped his hands and lifted his eyes to mine. "Aye."

I shivered. Not from cold, but from fear. I was well traveled for my ten years. For that I may thank my former career. I had the common knowledge of conjurers, tricksters, dabblers in the unknown, therefore the forbidden. My mind told me that I was in danger. *The first thing a conjurer will take*, the common knowledge said, *is the soul. So fine is his skill that you will not realize your loss until it is too long gone.*

And yet I could see nothing evil, nothing fell, in the dark, tired eyes of the man who revealed himself as part of that suspect brotherhood. There was only Alan, tired, and yet very much the same man who had defended me from

the grim harvest of my thievery.

I listened not to my mind but to my heart. In the light of his fire I could see that he was breathing differently, much like a man who has expended a great deal of effort.

"M'lord," I asked softly, going to his side. "Are you unwell?"

He raised his hand and waved my question gently away. "M'lord, can I get you anything? Water —?"

"Hush, boy," he said at last. His voice was weary, but patient. He placed a hand upon my shoulder and got slowly to his feet. "Ah. That is better."

"Are you ill?"

This seemed to amuse him, for he smiled. "Not at all, boy. Only used."

"Used?"

"Aye. Used. Magic is not free for the taking, boy. One must give something in return." He raised his arm, stretching muscles which were cramped and stiff.

"What — what do you give, m'lord?"

He paused in his stretch, abandoned it, and came to stand beside me. His hand moved down, lifted my face up to his own. I felt again, that sense of falling into the depths of his gaze. I was, again, held by the dark eyes which had only moments ago glowed with sorcerous power.

"Do — do you seek my soul, m'lord?" I whispered.

He did not speak for a moment, but seemed to be considering my words. When he did speak, his voice was colored with amusement. "No, boy. Or, perhaps, yes."

I trembled now, and moved away from his hand. He shook his head, his eyes softening. "No, boy. I do not seek your soul to take and keep. It is only that if I seek it, I seek it to show to you."

"M'lord?"

"Enough of this now." He shrugged his shoulders as though throwing off a burden. He took up the skinned rabbits and the sticks I had found to spit them. "Are you not hungry? Our dinner has been delayed a little, but it is more than enough time to make my belly impatient. Come, spit the rabbits, and we will eat."

I took the meat from him, and the spits. The tanner's words seemed of no more importance to me.

He was not flagrant with his skills, or prodigal of them. I well knew the effort it cost him to use his magic now. *Magic is not for free . . . one must give something in return.* I wondered, as I traveled with him, what it was that Alan gave. But I never asked. I had lost the first layers of my fear. I was no longer afraid of him. But I was not comfortable with the idea of magic. I had been too well versed in the common knowledge to lose that fear very soon.

He asked me once, if I would like to learn his skills.

"No, m'lord. These skills are beyond me." I smiled and shook my head. "I can steal a pair of boots —"

"Sometimes," he said with wry amusement.

"Aye. Most times. But I would not try to steal the fire."

"Is that what you think I do? Steal the fire?"

I shrugged.

"Well, well. It might be an answer. From whom do you think I steal it?"

The gods?"

"The gods? Aye, maybe."

He smiled at that. "There are no gods, boy, but those of our own making."

I did not argue with him. I had little truck with gods in my short life. Were there gods, indeed? I did not know, and cared less. There was a body of gods commonly worshiped, but they had few of my petitions, and had answered even less.

"Whatever, m'lord. No, I have no wish to learn your skills."

"A pity."

"Could you teach me?" The contrary question came, almost unbidden, to my lips. I would not wish to learn, I assured myself, but I was only curious to know if the power could be learned.

But Alan shrugged. "It does not matter, does it? You would not learn."

"Well, aye." He could not have failed to hear the disappointment in my voice. It was obvious even to me.

His careful gaze held me for a long time. He is seeking something, I thought. What does he seek when he watches me like that?

Our travels took us from town to village to town, stopping at the inns and staying a few days. At night Alan would join the folk gathered at the landlord's hearth and exchange the news of the day. He was a great gossip and loved to hear the tales and legends of the area. He had not told me what task engaged him, and I could not see that any did, except the gathering of tales and the exchange of news.

Sometimes I asked him where we were going, and he always answered the same.

"We are looking for the dragon, boy."

I would laugh and tell him that everyone knew there were no such creatures as dragons. They inhabited the nursery tales which women told to keep young children behaved and certainly not the real world.

He would laugh, too, and say that perhaps I was right.

And so we visited the towns, and he would sit and gossip the nights away. He made no use of his magic, and he maintained, as best he could, the persona of a simple traveler. But at night, by the fading light of an inn's hearth or over the embers of a dying campfire, he would watch me. I would catch, at times, the light of hope in his eyes, and a careful speculation.

Winter had come. I had been with Alan for more than a year, and our journeying took us less and less to the villages and towns. In the autumn he had purchased two horses, and this surprised me, although I was not unhappy to finally ride. By the time the first snow had fallen, we were in the foothills of the northern mountains, and we had not entered a town for nearly a month. We had actually passed two by, and as I saw the last one disappear behind the rocky bend of a river, I asked him again where we were bound.

"Seeking the dragon, boy."

The same answer. I began to wonder if he was serious.

We traveled ever upward, farther and farther, until we lost the beeches and birch trees and were surrounded by

the hoary eaves of evergreens. The thin skin of the earth gave way in many places now to rocky bone, thrusting upward in boulders through the soil. We traveled above the tree line, and there were places where all the majesty of mountain and forest was revealed to us.

After a time we came to places ravaged by fire. Trees were stripped and blackened. Few creatures ran to hide from us, and dinner was difficult to find. What I was able to catch was hoarded and made to last for many days.

Wrapped in my cloak one night, finishing our scant meal, I asked him what he thought must have caused the fire.

"Lightning, perhaps?" I asked, for it had been known to happen that a bolt would strike a tree and the fire would spread, unchecked, killing thousands of acres, hundreds of miles of trees.

Alan shook his head. "The dragon."

I looked at him long and saw that he was in earnest. "There are no dragons," I said, more to quiet my awakening fear than to refute his statement. I did not laugh this time.

Neither did he. "There is one. And that one guards what I seek."

I looked around me at the blackened forest, thinking that in the nursery tales they told you that dragons breathed fire. I huddled deeper into my cloak. I was afraid.

He saw that and smiled. "You need not fear, boy, for we will part company before I meet the dragon."

That gave me even greater fear. "Never, m'lord."

"I am afraid so, boy. You can be of little use to me then, and perhaps a hindrance. I would ask you to wait for me, though, for it may be, I hope it will be, that I will return and we can continue together."

I was frightened, there was no covering it, and I made no attempt to hide it. I was coming to love him. It was, perhaps, that he was good to me, or because a boy at that age easily loves the one who acts as a father to him. Whatever it was, I was not going to leave him. I told him this, but he would have none of it.

"You can journey with me a little farther. Then we will part company. Wait, if you will, or leave. That is your choice, boy."

There was no appeal to that calm decision, and I did not speak further. But I resolved in my heart not to leave him.

He told me then the purpose of his visits to the towns. He did not love the local gossip for its own sake, he said, but it was the surest way to learn the tales and legends of an area. The farther north we had come, the more often did he hear the tales of the dragon.

It guarded something, he did not say what, but it was something he was willing to throw his life away for; therefore, I judged it to be of great value. A treasure, perhaps, or a talisman. I did not ask, for I reasoned that it must be a fearful treasure if it was worth his life to gain.

We traveled for two more days at the timberline, he silent and I inwardly stiffening my resolve not to leave him no matter how he commanded me. And then we came to the peak.

It was a huge bare place, a giant rocky prominence pocked with the mouths of caves, covered with scree and boulders. Not a living thing grew upon its barren sides. It loomed above us like an angry skull. It made me afraid.

We were silent for a long time, he watching the peak, I watching him. I knew that he was going to dismiss me. I had my arguments, weak as even I thought they were, prepared.

He looked away from the peak. "It is time, boy."

"No, m'lord. I will not leave now."

"You do not have a choice."

"Will you tie me here, then, or take my horse?"

He smiled. "I do not think that will be necessary. You will do as you are bid, as you always have. It has been one of your chief virtues." Here he smiled again, for we both knew that my virtues were few.

"How can you ask this of me? We have traveled together for more than a year, m'lord. I thought I had earned your trust."

If I had thought that last would be a telling shot, I was mistaken. Alan merely nodded. "You have, over and over again, boy. And now I would entrust you with one more thing."

"To abandon you when you need me!"

"No. You are to wait here." He reached beneath his cloak and took out the dagger which was sheathed there. In the sunlight I could see a glimmer of light along the hilt of the sword he always wore.

He is mad, I thought then, and going against a dragon with only a sword. I said nothing, but took the dagger he held out to me. It was a beautiful thing, slim and sharp. The grip was chased silver and bore a single pale green jewel.

"Keep it in your boot, boy. You may need it."

"I want to help you!" It came out more as a wail than an insistence, and I was ashamed to hear the crack in my voice.

"You cannot help, and would only hinder."

"You are going after a dragon with a sword. Where will that get you?" I was angry and my voice mocked. "He will melt your sword, m'lord, and then where will you be?"

It surprises me now, looking back, that he was so patient with me. But he was, perhaps because he understood something of my feelings. He spoke softly, his voice even and reasonable. "I have more than my sword, boy. I have the magic."

"But I want to help."

That caused him to laugh. He did not laugh unkindly, but he was surely amused. I was wounded.

"I am pleased that even now I can provide amusement, m'lord."

"Do not be hurt, boy. But you cannot help. You cannot go against a dragon." He paused then, but went on. "And you have no magic."

I was chastened. He was right. I had no magic, and I was, after all, only a small boy, a hindrance. Should I not have turned away the opportunity to learn of his magic? In my mind I knew that I could not have learned enough to be able to help him now. It must take many years of study, I reasoned. Still, in my heart I felt the sharp fang of

regret.

"What would you have me do?"

"Ah. Now that is better. Wait here. Wait as long as you can or dare. You will know if I am able to return. When you decide that I cannot, you must run for your life. Run as hard as you have ever run before, for if I fail, the dragon will be out and his fury will seek victims. Run back the way we came, boy, and make your way to the King."

I stared at him. "To the King, m'lord? It is a month's ride to the King. And once there, how will I gain entrance to see him?"

He nodded to the dagger he had given me. "That will be your pass to the King. He will know it well, for it was his until he gifted me with it."

"The King gave you this?" I could not reconcile my picture of Alan the conjurer with this Alan who was now telling me that the King himself had gifted him with a jeweled dagger.

"When you see him, tell him you have come from me. And tell him that I have failed."

"Failed in what, m'lord?"

"He will know. If he wishes you to know, he will tell you."

"But —"

"You butt more than a ram sensing a ewe in heat, boy!" Alan's dark eyes flared with a sudden anger. "It is enough that you do as you are bid. Will you?"

"Aye, m'lord. I will."

His expression grew kinder. He reached across the horses and dropped a hand upon my arm. "You have been a good servant. I hope that we will leave here together. But if we do not, I know that you will do as I bid."

I loved him then. Tears sprang to my eyes, and I dashed them angrily away with the back of my hand. "Aye, m'lord, I will." And truly I thought that I would.

He was satisfied. "Tell the King, then, that you have studied with me. He will find a place for you."

"Studied with you? I have not studied with you, m'lord."

"Think you not? Aye, well, the King may find differently." He left me then with no further word, and I watched him go. He took his horse as far up the scree as he could and then left it. I saw him drop his hand beneath his cloak to loose his sword. Poor sword, and what good would it be against dragons?

I had truly intended to obey his instruction, partly through fear and mostly through love. But I did not. When he was far from me, nearly halfway up the peak, I started to move forward. I thought I was only going for a better look, for I was loathe to stay back when I could see.

I walked my horse up the scree, guiding him carefully at first, and then giving him his head, leaving him alone to pick his own way. We drew even with the place where Alan had left his own mount, and passed it. But soon the way was too hard and I stopped. On foot I crept farther up the rocky slope. The scree had given way to hard rock, but the path, such as it was, led straight up now.

I was an active boy, and found little difficulty scram-

bling for a hand-and foothold where necessary. I still think that I had thought only to see. He was out of my sight now, too far up for me to catch even a glimpse of him.

I balanced where I was, hands clinging to a ledge above my head, feet braced against a jutting rock below. There I stood when the sound came.

It was a horrible noise, a trumpeting, a bugling, and a hissing all at once. The air was filled with sulfurous stink, my breath caught in my throat, gagging me with fear. I trembled in every limb and would have run back the way I came, heedless of caution, but for the sound of his cry.

It was not a cry of pain or fear, but the bellowed sound of Alan's magic words, commands in that almost-familiar language of power. The shrieking increased. The air about me throbbed with stench and power. I clutched my handhold and squeezed my eyes shut.

I heard his voice again, and this time it was a cry of pain. I did not think, for if I had, I surely would not have done what I did. I scrambled upward again, my mind a grey blank wall, not admitting fear or pain or hope. I simply responded to Alan's cry.

The way twisted. There was no longer a path. I scrambled and climbed, clinging to rocks I never would have chosen for holds if I had been able to think.

And then I saw the dragon.

It was horrible. It was huge, and it stank like sulfur and cesspits. In the fading afternoon light, the scales of its armor reflected the golden sunlight. At its feet, small and to my eyes vulnerable, lay Alan. He did not move. Is he dead, I thought. The pain of loss ran through me.

My eyes ran with tears and stung. I could not put up a hand to wipe them, for I was clinging with precarious balance to the edge of the long drop from the dragon's cave.

Venom ran from the dragon's jaws. It dropped, hissing and steaming to the ground where Alan lay. "Oh move, my lord!" And he did, but barely and only slowly.

The beast rose above him. It was larger than my eyes could see in one terrified glance. There are words bards use to describe dragons. There are phrases they call upon time after time. They tell of wide reaches of leathery wings, arched and clawed. They tell of a head larger than the body of a horse, of a neck muscled and scaled, thicker around than the largest tree in the forest. They tell of the stink of the flames which issue from the maw of such a beast. They have not seen a dragon.

Had they, had they once come within sighting distance of a dragon, they would not tell of these things. They would tell, instead, in words which stuttered with fear, of the soul-chilling terror of the beast. They would tell of the stone to which their limbs turned, while their hearts and minds screamed for flight. They would tell how every purpose, good and ill, fled their hearts, blotted out by the immense shadow of a beast which should have lived only in legend.

I did not flee. I pretend to no nobility of heart. I would have fled had I the power to move, had I been able to get my paralyzed limbs to take me back down the mountain. But I could not. So I hung, shaking and weeping in my terror.

Alan moved again, hunching his shoulders, gathering his breath to speak. I could barely hear his words about the dragon's steaming pant.

*"Poeir ti cloake, poeir for strengthu; ti ban faer!"*

His words were soft, quiet, but bore, even to my untutored ears, a power. Through the sting of my tears, through the darkness of my fear, I could see that his sword arm was bent under him in a way that no arm should bend.

*"Poeir ti cloake."* I barely saw his lips move, his eyes were squeezed tightly shut, whether to lock out the sight of the dragon or to lock in his concentration, I did not know.

*"Poeir for strengthu."*

He asks for strength, I thought, and wondered how I knew. It was the language of magic which he spoke, a language foreign to me, and yet so haunting and familiar. I listened to Alan's words, repeated them in my heart, and took faint strength from them.

*"Poeir ti ban faer . . ."* His voice was ragged and stumbling now.

Power to banish fear . . . There was no lessening of the fear in my heart. *Poeir ti ban faer*, I repeated silently. And there was, faintly, a softening of the terror which had turned my limbs to stone.

The beast turned its head as I watched, and the flame of its breath passed above us, close enough to scorch.

*"Poeir"* I whispered. *"Poeir for strengthu!"* Not for me, I begged silently, not for me! For Alan! Not breathing, not thinking of anything but Alan who lay at the feet of Death, I clambered upward, forcing my hands to grasp the crumbly shale, forcing my feet to find grips and hold them. I could barely control my limbs. Fear might have been lessened, but it was not banished. I stood upon the ledge and stumbled toward Alan.

*"Poeir,"* I said, hearing my own voice as a weak croaking. *Poeir ti ban faer, for strengthu!"* The dragon reared back again, beat its wings against the sky, and darted suddenly downward, fangs gleaming in the sharp light of day.

"Dragon! No! Dragon!" I screamed. I dropped to my knees beside Alan, and he twisted toward me, his face shaped by pain to one I hardly knew.

"What word, m'lord? What word?"

"Yield!" he gasped. "Gielden."

"Gielden!" I screamed. "Gielden!"

The dragon paused, its eyes gleaming with dark hatred. Alan grasped my wrist. "A spell, boy. A spell."

A spell? I knew no spell! But the words I had heard him use, those which I had repeated, might be shaped into a spell, might they not? I took a long breath. "Bi min poeir, Dragon, gielden!"

It did not yield, but it drew back. The words arrested its dripping fangs, stilled, for a precious moment, that downward swoop which would have ended Alan's life. I leaped to my feet, scrambling in and under the enormous foreleg of the beast, running for Alan's sword. The stench of the dragon rose up and staggered me.

*"Poeir ti ban faer."* This time my chant was supported by Alan's voice. The ground beneath my feet seemed suddenly less solid, my breath was light in my chest. My head seemed filled with a frightening kind of light and fire.

I darted beneath the dragon's leg, my arm brushing against scales which felt like armor. I snatched up the sword which lay behind the leg of the beast, just below the enormous sweep of its chest. Whirling, I tossed it to Alan who caught it, fumbling, in his left hand.

Spade-shaped and huge, the dragon's scaled head lowered, darting in and down toward where I cowered beneath it. Venom and flame dripped from its fangs, huge black eyes glittered and whirled as it sought me.

"Run, boy!" Alan cried. His voice was cracked with his pain, breaking up. There was an edge of desperate fear there. "Run, boy!"

But I could not run. Run to where? A dash forward or to either side would bring the dragon's huge head sweeping after me, fangs bared and seeking the taste of my blood. Where could I run?

"*Poeir ti ban faer*," I whispered. I was light with fear, and frozen with it. But as I spoke the words, I felt a part of me leaving, withdrawing from my body. Even as I realized this, I felt something new enter me, a power and a strange kind of strength which had nothing to do with strength of limb. It was a kind of strength of heart.

I took the deepest breath I could in the dragon-reek, glanced at Alan who was climbing slowly to his feet. His face was white and strained with fear and pain. He hefted the sword in his left hand, not his sword hand for that arm was broken and dangling at a sickening angle.

"*Poeir*," he gasped.

"*Poeir*," I said after him. "*Poeir for strengthu!*" The dragon's head was snaking closer, weaving back and forth now, seeking me and the best way to snatch at me.

I am too near his leg, I realized, for him to risk a clear attack. Aye, and if I was behind the leg . . . I did not

waste time on the thought, but darted behind the huge trunk of the foreleg. In the shadow of his leg and chest, I could hear the rumble of the bellow of rage which was working its way from the cavern of its throat. "Strike, m'lord! Strike now!"

He did not need me to direct his stroke. There is a place just under the jaw, a tender and vulnerable place where the scales of a dragon's armor do not quite overlap. It was that place Alan struck, thrusting his sword in with all the strength his left arm possessed.

He cried aloud, whether from pain or triumph, I could not tell. The stink around us grew and doubled. Black blood, hissing and steaming as it felt the cool touch of the air, ran down the dragon's neck.

"Get out, boy!" And as he needed no instruction from me to strike, I needed no warning from him to flee. The air was filled with the death screams, screams which rose higher and louder, filling the air until they were not so much sounds as feelings, not so much heard with the ears but felt in every part of my body and mind.

Out from under the bulk of the monster, crouching as close to the ledge of the cliff as I dared, I watched Alan follow up his advantage and strike again and again until the thing, its throat torn, its jugular in bloody shreds, reared a last time, blotting out the sun with the immensity of its bulk, and fell.

That fall, that crashing weight, sent me sprawling face downward, retching from the death-stench. I looked up, wiped dirt and sickness from my mouth, and saw Alan wiping his sword upon his cloak.

He stood, weaving upon legs which seemed about to fail him, caught his balance and looked back at me.

"*Heorte-cild*," he said, his eyes bright in his pain-



drawn face. "Heorte-cild."

Heart's child. The word's were soft upon my heart. He staggered, stumbled once, and went into the dragon's cave. Heart's child. I do not know how long he was there, or what he did, for the thing that I called strength of heart had left me. My legs gave out and my sight grew dark. I fainted.

He told me he was angry, over and over, as he wiped my face clean. He told me he would dismiss me, for he had no need of a servant who could not follow orders. I knew he did not mean it, for his ministrations were tender and his eyes belied all of his words. I helped him down the mountain when we were both steadier, leaving behind us the reek and stink of the dead monster.

We did not find our horses until we were nearly a mile from the dragon's mount. When we did, I tore the spare shirt in my pack into strips to bind Alan's arm and form a rude sling. I helped him to mount carefully and led his horse while riding my own.

I told him that it was a miracle that the animals had not died from fear. He told me it was a miracle that I had not died from my own stupidity — and what did I think I was about disobeying his explicit orders? Had we both been killed, who would have gone to the King?

Alan looked at me then, and shook his head. "You do not understand."

"That is certain, m'lord. What did you seek in the dragon's lair?"

He smiled then and reached inside his cloak. He withdrew a small object, no larger than an egg. From what I could see of it, it was a jewel, blue in color, and brilliant. But it did not seem valuable enough, as lovely as it was, to risk his life in the taking. He saw my judgment in my eyes.

"No, it does not look like much, does it?"

"It is beautiful. But no, I cannot think it worth your life, m'lord."

Alan laughed. "I assure you, boy, it is. I assure you that it would be worth the lives of a regiment to recover."

"But what is it, m'lord?"

"What?" He tucked the jewel back inside his cloak and pretended surprise at my question. "Could you, the great sorcerer that you are, not be aware of what I carry?"

"I am no sorcerer, m'lord," I answered, knowing even then that' my words could not be true. "I only tried to help."

He softened, then. "Aye, you are boy. And help you did."

I caught his meaning and shook my head again. Hope was balanced against fear. I could feel in memory the terrible feeling of draining and filling, that feeling that something I knew nothing about was lending strength to me. I shivered and told him that I only provided the distraction that he needed to kill the beast. But he did not agree.

"There is power in you, boy, The discovery was painful. Aye, I know that. But by its discovery, you have saved others such pain."

Alan reached out his good hand and lifted my chin, his eyes finding mine and holding them. There was, in his

own eyes, a light of satisfaction. But when he spoke his words were wry and amused. "I recognized you, boy, when I first saw you. It took time, though, for you to recognize yourself."

"And the jewel, m'lord?" I turned the subject purposely, not wanting to dwell upon the power and the things it took in exchange.

His hand dropped to the place where the jewel lay within his cloak. "A key, boy. A simple key."

"To what, m'lord?"

"Why to a treasure, of course."

I shook my head again. "It seems part of a treasure, not a key."

"Still, it is a key. It lay in legend as long as it lay in that dragon's hoard. Some said it was real, some said it was a fable."

"What does it do?"

He laughed aloud at that. Silently, he removed the jewel from its place of safety. "Put out your hand, boy."

Slowly I did. He dropped the jewel into my palm. It was cool and hard. But even as I thought it so, it began to gleam and grow warm. It took, quickly, the warmth of a living thing, and I knew that it should not have garnered the warmth of my own body that fast. Startled, I looked up.

"It is warm, m'lord. And see how it glows!"

Alan smiled, but it was not a smile of amusement, more one of gratification. He reached for the jewel again and let it sit, for a moment, in his own hand. It lost none of its glow.

"This might have told you something many months ago, boy, had we had it then."

"What, m'lord?"

"That you have the power. That you will make a good student."

"Student. What will I study?"

"Much. And it may be that you will teach us, as well. We are a much-maligned brotherhood, those of us with the power. Tricksters, conjurers, dabblers in evil they call us." He laughed and it was a bitter sound. "But that will change."

"How?"

"With the help of the King. We will found an Order, an Order not of sorcerers and tricksters, but of men skilled in magic and of men who would seek the power to be found in truth."

"It is the King's will?"

"Aye, so it is. It is his mission you have saved, boy, as well as my own life. You will find us both grateful. They will call us tricksters no more, boy. They will call us wise men. Wizards."

Alan shifted uncomfortably in his saddle, and I knew that his arm pained him despite the bandage and sling that I had rigged. He gestured with his good hand and we stopped. He reached across the necks of our horses and placed his hand upon my shoulder. "You will be welcomed, boy, by the King."

"M'lord?"

"Aye, you will be. You will study hard, and you will someday make a fine wizard, boy."

I stared at him. There was weariness in his voice and

no prophecy. He spoke his words not in faith but from some sure knowledge. I, a wizard? I, part of a respected Order? I wondered what lay ahead to transform a thief and a servant into a wizard. But if he did not speak in faith, it was I who accepted in faith and in love.

That day I was content to simply travel with him. It took us more than a month of journeying to reach the court of the King. During that time we stopped in the villages and towns, listened to the gossip, and he healed. His great treasure he kept ever close to him, never letting it go from the safety of its place in his cloak.

It was upon that stone that our Order was founded. But it was not upon that stone that my own faith was founded. The base of my faith was Alan. I saw not, in those days, the founding of Orders. I saw only the beginning of a new

place for me. And glimmering and new to me, I caught, through his eyes, and soon through my own, glimpses of my own soul: the soul I had feared he would take, the soul he had given me.

Many have come after me, many have loved him as I did, for ever did he inspire the love of those souls he sought to uncover. I have watched, in wonder and joy, as he brought, one by one, slowly and carefully, the many boys into our Order who gave to it its strength and respected status. For me, however, those who came later were merely repetitions of the miracle that visited me that long-ago day.

For I, once a thief, lately a servant, was, that day, a Wizard's Boy.

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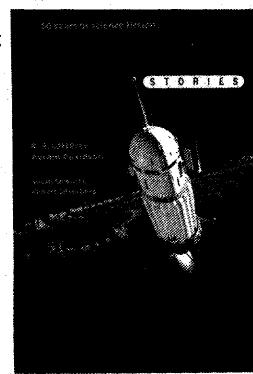
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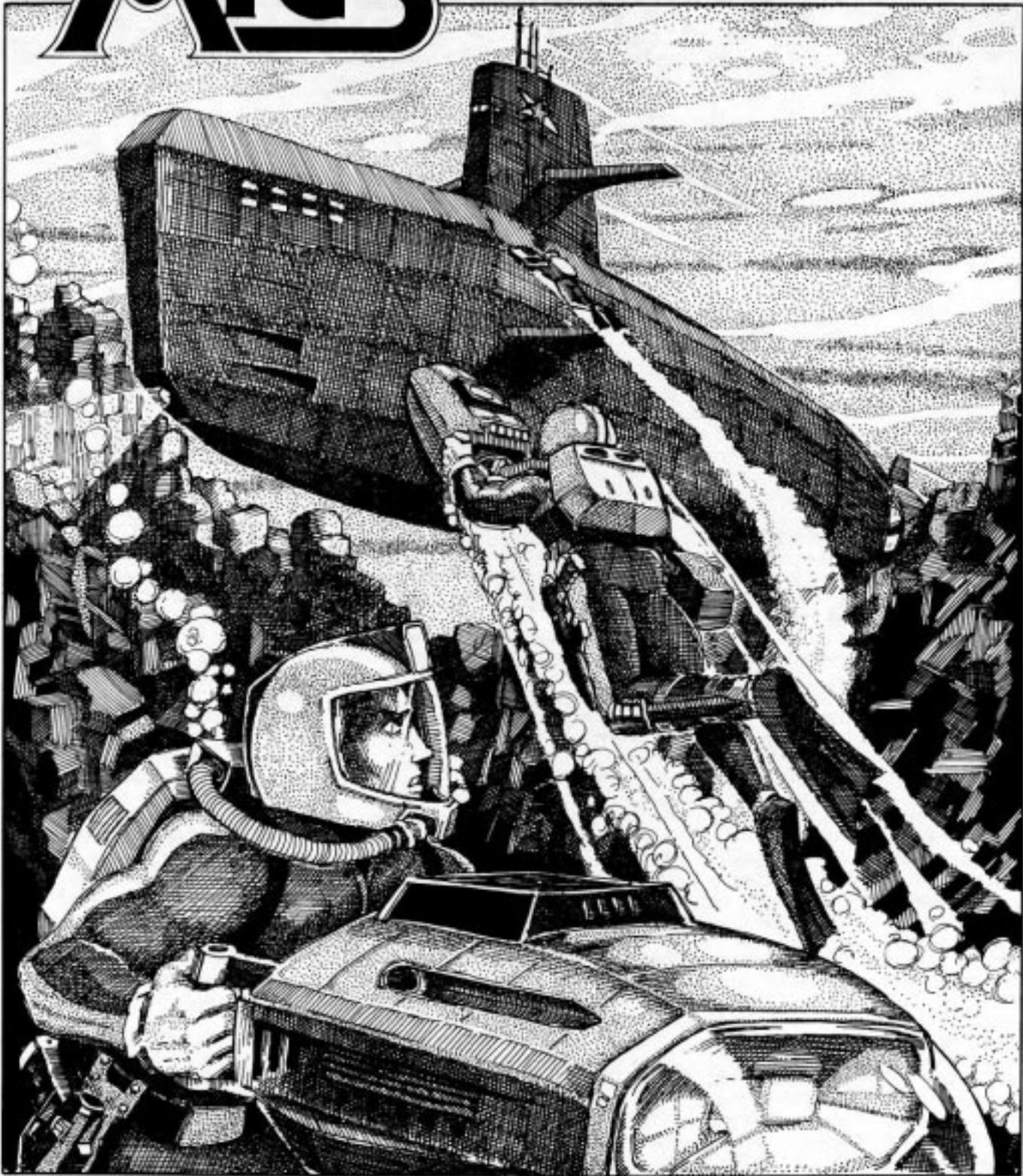
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Exploration, sabotage, salvage, espionage — The undersea world in the far future holds many dangers for the unwary, and great rewards for the cautious (and lucky). William Tracy investigates the watery worlds of the Frontier on page 78.

# Knowledge is Power!

*A skills system for GAMMA WORLD® characters*

by John M. Maxstadt

Except for actual fighting, much of the GAMMA WORLD® game revolves around what the player characters know and what they don't know. Success and survival regularly depend on knowing how this artifact works, what that sign says, what this building is, how that monster is likely to behave, how to deal with this Cryptic Alliance, or what those robots are doing. Mutational powers, often crucial in combat, quickly come to the end of their usefulness elsewhere. *Precognition* and telepathy, the only two mutations likely to provide any useful data, are usually restricted by Game Masters who (often rightly) fear abuse by players who would claim omniscience for their characters if they could.

Player characters will pick up some knowledge (about monsters, for example) as they gain experience in adventuring. Other information pertaining to a particular scenario will no doubt be scattered around in the form of clues. The GM may reasonably hope that the players will be able to figure out some things for themselves. But, all this leaves open the question of prior knowledge. What do the player characters know before the campaign begins? Did they just roll off the turnip truck, never having heard of a badder or a yexil, and unable to understand what an explosion is? Or, if they know more, how much more do they know? And do they all know the same things?

These questions have important implications for many game situations. If the party captures a batch of centisteeds for riding purposes, how should the GM rule? Can they just hop on and yell "Hi-yo, Silver!" or do they have to learn how to ride — and, if they do, how do they go about it? What rationale does the GM use with the player who says, "Any idiot knows how a pistol works. I just point it, pull the trigger, and see what happens. Why do I gotta roll dice?"

There are opportunities connected with the issue of prior knowledge to beef up

weak characters and give various party members different roles to facilitate party cooperation. The GM could also use prior knowledge to make some characters more interesting, especially Pure Strain Humans, who are essentially defined by seven numbers (six attribute scores and a hit-point total). Character backgrounds — past histories of player characters, detailing places they've been and things they've learned — can flesh out cardboard characters and improve roleplaying. However, the GM needs some control over backgrounds, lest the players decide that their characters have been everywhere and know everything.

These problems do not crop up so badly in most other role-playing games, because player characters in those games are defined primarily by what they know. In the AD&D® game — the inevitable standard — class, race, and many other factors determine what a player character knows before play begins. Fighters know how to use weapons, clerics and magic-users know how to cast spells, and thieves have a variety of useful skills. Each of the demic and semi-human races has its special area of knowledge and skills. Weapons are chosen based on character class, and languages based on race and intelligence. Players can also roll for "secondary skills," although that table is often ignored because many of the listed skills are of questionable utility (limner/painter?), and because skilled NPC laborers and money are both relatively plentiful in the campaign.

In the comparatively primitive milieu of the GAMMA WORLD game, both money and skilled workers are usually in short supply, and player characters might find it useful to have a few mundane, practical skills. But most of the AD&D systems translate poorly. Imposing full professional classes on GAMMA WORLD gaming would change its complexion. Race doesn't mean quite the same thing in GAMMA WORLD gaming, and it seems illogical to apportion knowledge strictly by racial type (although it might be interesting to consider what special skills and knowledge might be appropriate to different kinds of mutated

animal characters). Probably the simplest and most easily adapted system is the one used for secondary skills — having the players roll dice for their characters' skills and areas of knowledge when they roll up their other attributes, before the start of play. The system below also borrows from the AD&D language system in that it allows racial type and intelligence to influence the die rolls, and it is more generous than the AD&D secondary-skills system in that it allows more than one skill per character.

In this system, a distinction is made between *skills* and *areas of knowledge*, and the two are treated separately. Skills are basically manual abilities that involve some training and previous experience. Areas of knowledge are more erudite, and most involve some kind of formal education. Areas of knowledge are, on the whole, more valuable and harder for characters to get.

Pure Strain Humans and mutated humanoids may begin the game with skills and areas of knowledge. Mutated animals do not, unless the campaign assumes that they have grown up among humans who have treated them as complete equals. Since established animal types (as per DRAGON® issue #89) cannot talk without a specific mutation, it seems more likely that their first human contact, at least on an equal footing, will be with their human and humanoid player character comrades. The GM may wish to allow mutated animal PCs to learn skills and knowledge from other party members as play progresses; this will be taken up at the end of this article.

Players using human or humanoid characters will roll 1d4 for skills and knowledge after rolling up their other characteristics (attribute scores and mutations) and before buying equipment or beginning play. Pure Strain Humans add one to the die roll, while mutated humanoids subtract one; a humanoid that ends up with no skills or knowledge (by rolling a one) can be assumed to have been orphaned or outcast at an early age, or to have grown up in a tribe of primitive, feral humanoids — either way, the charac-

ter has had little contact with human civilization. If greater than zero, the modified number indicates how many skills and areas of knowledge (combined) the character has mastered before the beginning of play. The player gets that number of rolls on the skills or the knowledge table.

Before each roll, 1d6 should be rolled to determine the appropriate table. The die roll is modified as follows: -1, for mutated humanoids; -1, for characters with less than 9 IN; +1, for characters with over 12 IN; and, an extra +1, for characters with over 15 IN. All these modifications are *cumulative* as they apply to each character, so a humanoid with 17 IN adds one to the die. A modified result of four or less indicates a skill; five or more indicates an area of knowledge. The specific skills and areas of knowledge are rolled on the following tables, with an unmodified d10 and d12 respectively.

| <b>d10</b> | <b>Skills</b>         |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 1          | Bowmaking/Fletching   |
| 2          | Clothesmaking         |
| 3          | Cooking               |
| 4          | Fighting With Weapons |
| 5          | Fishing               |
| 6          | Foraging              |
| 7          | Hunting/Trapping      |
| 8          | Riding                |
| 9          | Vocation              |
| 10         | Weaponsmaking         |

| <b>d12</b> | <b>Knowledge</b>              |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| 1          | Ancient Culture and History   |
| 2          | Ancient Language              |
| 3          | Astrology and Meteorology     |
| 4          | Botany                        |
| 5          | Cryptic Alliance              |
| 6          | Economics and Trade           |
| 7          | Government and Bureaucracy    |
| 8          | Human Physiology and Medicine |
| 9          | Literacy                      |
| 10         | Physical Science              |
| 11         | Underground/Black Market      |
| 12         | Zoology and Entomology        |

Duplications rolled on either table should be rerolled on the same table. Alternately, the GM and the player may agree to allow a skill or area of knowledge rolled twice to stand as an improved skill or area of knowledge. A character with Fighting With Weapons skill rolled twice might be +4 to hit and do +2 damage, or might have the usual +2/+1 with six weapons instead of three; a character with Ancient Language knowledge twice might know French, Spanish, or Russian (or even a computer-programming language) in addition to pre-holocaust United American English.

Skills and areas of knowledge which the GM feels the character would be unable to master (discussed further at the end of this article) should also be rerolled. In fact, the GM should feel free to take liberties

with the results of dice rolls in this as in other areas of the game. The GM may prefer to assign each character's last skill or knowledge himself rather than leave it up to the dice, to create a more unified whole or to balance out particularly strong or weak characters. The GM may give some characters extra skills and knowledge, if the party is short on humans and humanoids or if no one happened to roll such necessary areas of knowledge as Ancient Language, Literacy, and Human Physiology and Medicine.

## Skills

*Bowmaking/Fletching* skill enables a character to make short bows, arrows, crossbows, and bolts of normal quality (no bonuses or penalties in use). The character will need materials and tools. Short bows are made of straight branch-wood and strong cord. Arrows are made from light straight sticks, feathers or bristles, a little thread or cord, and a piece of stone, horn, or bone for the head. Necessary tools include a sharp knife and a chipping or grinding stone. Crossbows require the same tools and materials as short bows, plus small pieces of stone, horn, or bone and tools to work same. Bolts are made like arrows. Metal arrowheads and crossbow workings are only possible if the character also has Vocation skill (see below). A short bow takes four hours to make, after all the tools and materials are assembled; a crossbow takes seven hours, and arrows and bolts an hour apiece (fifteen minutes if a ready-made head is available). In a shop with advanced tools, such as a clamp and a pedal-operated lathe, times may be cut in half.

The GM may wish to assign a percentage change that bows will be defective and that arrows will not be "true;" depending on the circumstances of their manufacture. Arrows and bolts that miss or that hit AC 1 or 2 have one chance in four of breaking, but the head will be undamaged (all heads but metal ones will eventually wear out, however).

The GM may opt to allow characters with this skill to make blowguns and darts as well. Darts require small twigs, feathers or fiber of some kind, thread, a knife, and ten minutes of work each. Blowguns can be cut from hollow wood such as bamboo — solid wood cannot be bored to make a blowgun without a laser drill. Mutants with *genius capability (mechanical)* and Bowmaking/Fletching skill can make weapons as above that do an extra die of damage, if they make both the bow or blowgun *and* the projectiles, and if they spend triple the time in making them.

*Clothesmaking* skill enables a character to stitch together passable clothes and footgear. Nothing well-fitted or becoming (or saleable) will be possible without

woven cloth and tailor's tools (scissors, ruler, etc. — all very expensive), but furs and skins can be laced together with rawhide to cover one's nakedness or make cheap armor (furs and heavy skins, AC 8) at no cost, once the pelts are obtained. The character could also make passable moccasins, packs, sacks, or a somewhat leaky tent from similar materials. The only tools needed are a sharp knife with an awl point (or a knife and an awl) and a needle, which can be made from a piece of bone or horn with the knife. Furs and skins or a sack can be made in half an hour; moccasins or a pack take an hour and a half, and a one-man tent takes two and a half hours, once the skins have been scraped and dried

*Cooking* skill enables a character to prepare and cook dead animals and plants, including poisonous and diseased ones, so that they are safe to eat. The GM may wish to exclude some extremely poisonous creatures (and tell the character which ones those are), but no disease can survive a thorough cooking. No amount of cooking will affect the radioactivity of a radiated carcass, which would be unsafe to handle in any case. Characters without Cooking skill could throw food suspected of being poisonous or diseased on a fire and hope for the best, but the GM should allow them only a small chance for success. Characters with Cooking skill are the only ones able to boil down creatures like soul beshes, win seens, etc., into antidotes and ointments.

Cooking requires a fire, a knife, and some sturdy sticks; but if anything is to be boiled (including drinking water), metal cookware will also be needed. A character with Cooking skill can start a fire in ten minutes using matches, in twenty minutes using a tinder box, or in an hour with just sticks and stones — under reasonable conditions (pouring rain or a windstorm would be unreasonable conditions). A character without Cooking skill will take twenty minutes with matches, an hour with a tinder box, and will never be able to start a fire without one or the other or some mutation like *pyrokinesis*.

*Fighting With Weapons* skill assumes that the character has been in an army or guard unit, and has been trained to use certain weapons. The player may choose three weapons, and his character will be +2 to hit and do +1 hp per die of damage with them. These bonuses are cumulative with those from *genius capability (military)*, *heightened physical attributes (strength)*, *taller*; and similar mutations. Mutated animals and humanoids with body weaponry like claws and teeth cannot use this skill to enhance those attacks, which are based on size (hit dice) rather than skill. Characters cannot develop skill with artifact weapons (guns, energy weapons, etc.) unless they have access to the

weapon and a virtually unlimited supply of energy or ammunition with which to practice. This will not happen before the start of play; it may be possible if the character learns the skill during the campaign (discussed at the end of this article) — at a Tech Level III base with an energy cell charger, for example. Player characters do not necessarily begin the game owning the weapons with which they have skill.

Fishing skill enables a character to make or assemble tackle and catch fish, by hook-and-line, net, bow-and-arrow, spear, or javelin, in fresh or salt water. Hook-and-line fishing requires a hook (made from a bent metal pin or needle, or carved from bone or horn), cord, and a flexible stick. Bait consists of bits of meat or fish, or insects, worms, and grubs which the character could gather in a few search turns. Net fishing requires a net at least one meter square, which costs 12 gold pieces or takes two days to make out of 30 meters of cord or twine. Arrow- and spear-fishing require that the projectile be tethered with cord or twine, and even then there is a 25% chance per hour of fishing that an arrow will be broken, lost, or warped beyond use (10% per hour for a javelin or spear).

In waters where fish are reasonably plentiful, a hook-and-line fisher will catch 1d8-2 kg of fish per hour, a net fisher 1d6-2 kg, and an arrow- or spear-fisher 1d4-2 kg per hour. Circumstances may lower these figures; some lakes, for example, will be "dead" due to chemical or radiation pollution, although a character with Fishing skill should usually be able to tell this by looking. Characters without Fishing skill supervised by a character with Fishing skill can also catch fish, using the same device as above, but subtracting four instead of two (so that they can never catch fish with bow-and-arrow or spear). A boat crew casting or dragging nets much larger than that described above may be supervised by one character with Fishing skill. They might catch up to 3d12 kg of fish per hour, depending on fishing conditions and the size of the boat, the crew, and the nets.

Most fish caught will be harmless to player characters, although many may be inedible or poisonous to eat. There will be the usual chance for random water-area encounters, of course. A character with Fishing skill will know most or all of the dangerous water creatures (especially the fish), and will know tricks like painting the bottom of a boat orange to keep the mutant, nine-eyed, orange-hating letharps away.

Foraging skill enables a character to find and identify edible plants (berries, roots, etc.). The GM should decide how much food such a character will be able to find

(if any), based on season, terrain, climate, etc. Whatever is found should be safe for consumption, either raw or after simple preparation that the character will know how to perform. If the character or someone else in the party has Cooking skill, the forager will have many more plants from which to choose. The character with Foraging skill is also able to identify a variety of poisonous, disease-carrying, or otherwise dangerous plants (including plant monsters). The GM should decide what plants the character will and will not recognize, possibly by rolling dice in some cases. Plants that only grow in an area where the character has never been before will certainly not be recognized. Plant monsters that are recognized will only be identified in general terms of behavior and attacks; the character may know that a horl choo is a predator that shoots poisoned spines, but not the poison intensity, or the creature's hit dice or relative intelligence

Hunting/Trapping skill enables a character to track, stalk, and set mechanical and improvised traps for wild animals. The chance to track large, terrestrial creatures that have passed by recently varies according to weather, terrain, and the nature and habits of the creatures, but will average about 75%. Stalking skill allows the character +1 to surprise creatures in forest or mountain terrain, +2 if he or she has been tracking them successfully. The stalker loses these advantages if he or she moves faster than "slow speed" or is accompanied by armed, armored, or otherwise noisy characters who do not have Hunting/Trapping skill. In all cases, the character with Hunting/Trapping skill is -1 to be surprised in forest and mountain terrain.

The character with this skill can also set mechanical jaw traps or homemade snares, deadfalls, and pit traps in regular animal runs, to catch small- to medium-sized animals (traps may be set for larger animals at the GM's discretion — and the hunter's peril). Mechanical traps cost 35 gp each; the other kind can be made out of cord and whatever is handy with a knife and an axe. The chance of catching anything will vary, depending on the season and the abundance of game, but will never exceed 15% per day for each mechanical jaw trap and 5% per day for each improvised one.

Characters with Hunting/Trapping skill will recognize the standard game animals (centisteeds, hoppers, etc.) when they see them. They will also recognize some of the more common predators (herps, parns, hawkoids, etc.) at the GM's option. The GM may rule that predatory animal PCs, such as mutated leopards and bears, will automatically have tracking and stalking (but not trapping) skills. Parties which include a character with Hunting/Trapping skill (or

a predatory animal) should have a much better chance of finding game in a day of hunting than a party which does not — a 90% chance, as the rules suggest, seems extremely generous for the latter.

Riding skill enables a character to tame and ride mount animals such as arns, brutorz, centisteeds, hoppers, pinetos, podogs, and similar animals featured in modules, Mutant Manuals, and ARES<sup>TM</sup> Section articles. Brutorz and other intelligent mounts need not be tamed, but they will only carry characters they wish to carry unless mentally controlled or otherwise coerced. Characters with Riding skill can fight with most weapons while riding a brutorz or a well-trained podog; all other mounts require the full attention of the rider.

Taming and training non-intelligent mounts (podogs, centisteeds, and the rest) should take days or even weeks, at the GM's discretion. The rules touch on the difficulties of taming, training, and riding some mount beasts — arns and podoga, for example, must be caught young.

It may be assumed that any character with Riding skill has already fallen from a hopper once and need not do so again. Characters with Riding skill will also understand the care and feeding of mount beasts, although the GM may rule that some can provide for themselves. Characters without Riding skill have no chance to tame or ride untamed mount beasts, and if they insist on trying they will be thrown for 1d6 damage and possibly trampled as well. Such characters may be able to hold on to a trained mount for some time, but have a 30% chance of falling off for 1d6 damage every two search turns; the chance is 40% for hoppers, and it is doubled for any mount beast which the unskilled character is riding for the first time.

Unskilled characters can ride cooperative brutorz and other intelligent mounts, but may require a DX check to stay on if the creature moves rapidly through difficult terrain. Under no circumstances can a character without Riding skill make a weapon attack while mounted, unless a character with Riding skill is controlling the mount. Beings with Riding skill also know the value and use of stirrups, reins, and similar gear, though they may not be able to manufacture them.

Vocation skill may be any of several useful trade skills, including blacksmithing, weaving, tanning, and the like. Characters with Vocation skill can find paid work in almost any reasonably large and prosperous base or town. Pay will vary according to the local economic conditions and demand for the skill, but an itinerant journeyman will almost never make much more than enough to support a moderate-sized party at subsistence level. Except as

near where the character is currently adventuring) and may know something about their forces and resources, including the signs, signals, and passwords of the organization. The GM may reasonably assume that the character left some enemies behind at that base, which could be the basis for some future scenarios. Under *no* circumstances does this knowledge allow a PC to be a member of a Cryptic Alliance before earning the required status points, but a character could take the considerable risk of posing as a member for a short period of time.

*Economics and Trade* knowledge is knowledge of buying and selling in the Gamma World economy. Characters with this knowledge know the prices of most standard items and are even able to guess at a fair price for some artifacts (i.e., the GM supplies a ballpark figure). Such characters also know where to go to buy and sell most items. If in a strange place, they are able to find out quickly.

Characters without this knowledge often walk open-eyed into places where they are robbed or swindled. Characters with this knowledge are able to identify and locate legitimate merchants. Of course, even "legitimate" merchants often cheat, especially if they have the "muscle" to handle angry customers. Characters with this knowledge get an IN check (modified by the GM, depending on how gross or transparent the fraud is) to detect overpricing, underbidding, or some other intentional deception on the merchant's part, even without any idea of what a fair price would be to begin with. Note that this does not allow characters to detect honest mistakes, as when the merchant does not really know what an artifact is worth. Such characters also get an IN check to resist the cajolery of characters with *genius capability (economic)*. A character with Economics and Trade knowledge will know if a particular item must be bought or sold through black marketeers; but he or she will not know how to find or deal with such people without Underground/Black Market knowledge (which see below).

*Governmental and Bureaucracy* knowledge is that of human and humanoid power structures and chains of command in the broadest sense, including cities, Cryptic Alliances, bases, tribes, gangs, etc. Characters with this knowledge can figure out how the lines of authority run in any such group: who really holds the power, and how to deal with that person or clique. Dealings might not be with the leader, but possibly with an underling strategically placed to do the party a service. Of course, dealings might or might not be entirely honest. Power structures differ, and it may take the character days of looking around and asking discreet ques-

tions before he or she is ready to wheel and deal, the more alien the power structure, the longer this will take.

This knowledge is not a substitute for Cryptic Alliance knowledge, but it might help in dealing with such a group. If snooping around a Seeker base, for example, a character with Government and Bureaucracy knowledge would never uncover all the secrets that a character with Cryptic Alliance knowledge would know, but he might put the total absence of artifacts together with the general prosperousness of the place in other ways, and conclude that this would not be the place to use a digital watch as a bribe or peace offering. It would be better for the GM to follow the above example and lead the player to the correct conclusions by underscoring the significant details and hinting at the important questions, rather than simply providing the information. This way, the character gets the benefit of his ability, and the player gets the experience of roleplaying it.

Once a character has figured out a power structure, he or she will have a functional +4 reaction adjustment with members of that structure, as well as an idea of the relative effectiveness of different sorts of bribes, threats, offers, etc. This does not always mean that the ideal bribe will be available to the character, although he could try to lie about it. Also, the GM may wish to allow more than a +2 reaction adjustment for particularly suitable and valuable bribes offered to particularly susceptible functionaries. If all the character wants to do is pass through a city or base unmolested, he or she should be able to deduce enough of the local norms to keep out of trouble, and should also be able to keep the rest of the party out of trouble, if they will listen to good advice.

*Human Physiology and Medicine* knowledge is none too advanced in GAMMA WORLD gaming, but is very valuable nonetheless. A character with this knowledge and a little medical equipment (clean rags, grease, certain herbs, etc.) can immediately heal 1d8 points of damage taken from any given hit and quadruple the patient's healing rate (four points per day of rest). However, some kinds of damage, such as from *sonic blast* or *radiation eyes*, will not yield to such treatment. Characters with this knowledge can also remove five intensity levels from poison inflicted by bite or sting (not contact poison or gas) by cutting open the wound and sucking out the poison. Such a character can recognize 2d4 GAMMA WORLD diseases (see "More Mutant Fever" in DRAGON issue #108), rolled by the GM when the character first learns Human Physiology and Medicine. The character will recognize the six standard artifact medicines (Antibiotics A, B, and C, Antivirins A and B, and Anti-parasitic — see "Mutant Fever" in

DRAGON issue #107), and the standard symbols which appear on other medical artifacts (red or white cross, caduceus, etc.). He or she will not automatically know how to use such artifacts without rolling, but will know that they are medical artifacts and may be allowed a bonus like the one for Ancient Culture and History knowledge with such artifacts, at the GM's option.

*Literacy* knowledge allows the character to translate written messages into spoken language. In short, he can read, but only if the language is familiar (post-holocaust United American English). He can sound out pre-holocaust English, since the alphabet itself has not changed much, but without Ancient Language knowledge he will not know what the words are or what they mean. Characters with Ancient Language knowledge and Literacy knowledge can decipher written pre-holocaust English, but they may need the help of a third character with Ancient Culture and History knowledge to really understand the message in some cases. For example, "Terminal parking in rear," means little even to someone who can sound out and define the individual words, unless that person also understands the basic workings of pre-holocaust travelports and starports.

*Physical Science* knowledge deals with scientific principles that govern physical phenomena, particularly phenomena that do not occur every day (such as explosions, electrical shocks, etc.). Characters with this knowledge will understand explosions and have some idea of how to focus or contain them. They will know what electricity is and that it is conducted by water and most metals. They will know that gases rise or fall according to their relative weight, and that, for example, the safest air in a burning building is near the floor. In short, they will know many things that the players also know, but that other player characters could not possibly have learned without special schooling.

The GM will have to be strict in refusing to allow player characters without Physical Science knowledge to make practical use of their players' understanding of physics, chemistry, etc. The scientific method itself (controlled experiments to test hypotheses) was not discovered by humans for thousands of years, so latter-day Galileos and Newtons among a PC party seem unlikely.

Characters with Physical Science knowledge will also understand things that many players cannot grasp, for some reason, such as that it is unsafe to approach (much less eat) a creature recently rendered radioactive by a party member's *radiation eyes*. Characters with this knowledge will have no special bonuses to figure out artifacts, but they

a source of funds, Vocation skill will seldom affect play by itself. It may be more effective in combination with other skills; with Vocation (tanning) skill and Clothes-making skill, a character could make leather or fiber armor; with Vocation (blacksmithing) skill and Weaponsmaking skill, a character could forge metal weapons, including swords. Of course, the local smith would probably not lend his tools and forge to a player character for nothing, but he might rent them. Player characters can never make metal armor, because that takes more practice and training than a wandering adventurer has time to spare.

*Weaponsmaking* skill enables a character to make Tech Level I and II weapons, excepting swords, muskets, and missile weapons that can be made by characters with Bowmaking/Fletching skill. These weapons will typically have wooden hafts and stone, bone, or horn heads, fastened with leather strap. Needed tools include a sharp knife, a chipping or grinding stone, and possibly an axe, adze, hammer, or pounding stone, depending on the weapon desired. (Exception: A club can be cut from any tree, so any character can make a club.) Tech Level I weapons will be -2 to hit and -1 per die of damage unless the heads are metal. With Vocation (blacksmithing) skill and the use of a forge, the character could make normal Tech Level II weapons, including swords and muskets. The GM must decide how long each weapon will take; a rule of thumb would be one hour per gold piece cost, variable by circumstances. (Exception: A sling can be cut out of leather in fifteen minutes, and sling bullets can be forged in ten minutes — sling stones, of course, are simply gathered.) Characters with *genius capability (mechanical)* and Weapons-making skill can make weapons that do an extra die of damage, but this takes triple the usual time.

## Areas of knowledge

*Ancient Culture and History* knowledge concerns United America during the Shadow Years and before the holocaust (For more information on the pre-holocaust years, see DRAGON issue #88, "Before the Dark Years.") This knowledge involves knowledge of technology, lifestyles, and important events. The character will understand what vehicles, guns, robots, etc., were, what they were used for, and (in very general terms) how they worked. The character may never have seen an artifact up close, and must still roll dice to figure out any artifact (except for batteries and ID cards); but he or she may subtract five from the start number due to knowing in general what the artifact is supposed to do in the first place. It is a great help in figuring out a vehicle, for

example, to know that it must be operated from inside and that it is supposed to go from place to place with controls to start it, stop it, steer it, etc. The GM may, of course, modify this bonus for some artifacts.

Characters with Ancient Culture and History knowledge understand concepts that seem self-obvious to us but that would never occur to other PCs, such as the fact that guns, vehicles, etc., are powered by batteries or other fuel sources that can be replenished or replaced — they do not work by magic, and they are not necessarily used up (and worthless) when they stop working. Characters with this knowledge understand most kinds of installations as well — what they were and how they worked. They recognize elevators, light switches, security cameras, etc., after at least a moment's thought, and should be able to figure out push-button-type systems like elevators with little difficulty. The GM may use the character's knowledge of history to leak pieces of background information on an area or adventure that he or she wants the party to have, but the GM will want to be careful to preserve the game balance here and avoid doing the party's thinking for them.

*Ancient Language* knowledge simply means that the character can speak and understand United American English as it was spoken before the holocaust — the patois of the Gamma World has changed so much since then that the languages commonly in use are virtually foreign to each other. Ancient Language knowledge does not enable a character to read, but if someone with Literacy knowledge will sound out written words for him, he can explain what they mean (although not necessarily their full significance; for that, Ancient Culture and History knowledge may also be required). Without help, this character can communicate with robots and talking computers that have had no contact with post-holocaust humans. Those that have had contact will have learned the Gamma World's patois, if they have any (artificial) intelligence at all; some, particularly androids, may still converse in pre-holocaust English when they do not wish to be overheard. All ranking Programmers know pre-holocaust United American English (as well as several programming languages), and they use it as a secret code and a sign of fellowship and brotherhood.

*Astrology and Meteorology* knowledge involves the ability to read the sky, by day and by night. By day, the character can tell time to the half-hour (more accurately if he or she can make a sundial), and can predict the next day's weather with approximately a 60% chance of success. By night, the character can tell time to the hour (unless it is overcast), and can navi-

gate long trips on land or water by the stars (an astrolabe or sextant will allow greater precision). The character is also able to plot horoscopes, and may believe in them; these will be no more accurate than they are in 20th-century reality, but they might be sold locally (as here) to the credulous.

*Botany* knowledge is knowledge of plants, animate and inanimate, dangerous and benign, including plant monsters in the rulebook and modules. Compared to a character with Foraging skill, a character with Botany knowledge will recognize more plants (including all or almost all of those in the rules) and will know more about them. The character may not know how many hit dice a plant has, but will know in general how hardy an opponent is compared to other plants, and may also know more esoteric but potentially useful things about a plant's habits and anatomy — that a kep has mobile seeds, or that a win seen can be made into poison antidote, for example. He or she will also be able to recognize several edible and medicinal plants, although without Foraging skill he or she may or may not be able to find them. Unlike a forager, a botanist may know about plants in faraway places he or she has never visited, since such knowledge is gathered by wandering scholars and passed on to the learned community. (Exception: Unique plants, such as the tarn zeb in GW2, Famine in Far-Go, will definitely *not* be known.)

Like the medieval bestiaries, this body of knowledge will also contain misconceptions and erudite errors, and may miss important pieces of practical information. Thus, the jungle lurker (DRAGON issue #85) may be listed as a philodendron which is frequently inhabited by invisible life-leechers (none of which have ever been captured for study), or the kai lin may be described in excellent detail except for any reference to its *radiation eyes*. It is up to the GM how much information to give a character with Botany knowledge, but the knowledge should be of significant benefit to the character.

*Cryptic Alliance* knowledge allows the character to know and make use of the information in the rulebook (pages 54-55) concerning one Cryptic Alliance. This information is generally secret and jealously guarded by the respective Cryptic Alliances, so there is no way that PCs could have learned any of it prior to the beginning of the campaign, although they might know the names and the general aims of some of the Cryptic Alliances. This knowledge assumes that the character was once recruited or captured by the Cryptic Alliance in question (which one could be determined by excluding one — say, the Created — and rolling a d12). The character, therefore, has been inside a Cryptic Alliance base (which may or may not be

will have some understandings in common with characters with Ancient Culture and History knowledge — notably, that artifacts operate on scientific and technological principles, not magical ones; that everything that moves or functions requires a power source; and, that mixing acceleradose with cur-in-dose will not necessarily produce a substance that simultaneously heals damage and neutralizes poisons, for example.

*Underground/Black Market* knowledge is the streetwise understanding of the ways of criminals and other social outcasts. Most towns of any size will have a "thieves' quarter" of some kind; some will consist of nothing else. Characters with this knowledge will be able to find and identify (or identify and avoid) the shady section of any town, although in some places this may require time and careful investigation (or an IN check, at the GM's option).

If the character wishes to deal with the criminal element, this knowledge picks up where Economics and Trade knowledge and Government and Bureaucracy knowledge leave off. It enables a character to find out where to buy and sell things illegally, and gives him a chance to tell if he is being cheated. It also enables him to figure out the true chain of command in a gang and gives him a reaction modifier with criminal types (or, perhaps, negates the negative reaction modifier that PCs without this knowledge would have when dealing with criminals).

The GM will want to see that the player role-plays this knowledge properly, using caution, tact, and quick thinking — if the player simply relies on his character's knowledge and the dice to take care of everything, the GM should feel free to reduce or remove the character's advantages until the player role-plays more realistically. The GM may assume that the character has "contacts" in his home town, which may or may not be within traveling distance. The GM could use these in starting and steering adventures, and it is less of a free lunch when one considers that the character has no reason to assume that his contacts are trustworthy.

*Zoology and Entomology* knowledge is that of animals and insects, particularly those large enough to be classed as monsters. This knowledge is analogous to Botany knowledge for plants, and has the same relationship with Hunting/Trapping skill that Botany has with Foraging skill. The zoologist will know more creatures and will know more about them than a hunter or trapper, but will lack the latter's practical skills of tracking, stalking, and trapping, and may suffer misconceptions about some animals similar to those suffered by botanists. Since there are more animal and insect monsters than plant

monsters, the GM may wish to restrict the zoologist to knowledge of a smaller percentage of the total field than is allowed the botanist.

## Learning new skills and knowledge

Skills and areas of knowledge will be rolled for human and humanoid PCs at the time of character creation, as explained above. The GM may also opt to allow player characters to learn new skills and knowledge as the campaign progresses. This should be tied to character status. Characters could receive training and education automatically on reaching certain rank levels, or they could "spend" status points on skills and knowledge rather than on increases in rank (the exact number varying with the value and difficulty of the skill or area of knowledge), at the GM's option. Either way, characters will not automatically receive the skills and knowledge they desire just because they have accumulated the necessary status points or achieved the appropriate rank. There are other considerations.

First, training or schooling will take game time, during which the character(s) will not be able to adventure. The GM should decide how long it will take, based on the complexity of the skill or knowledge (no less than a month in any case).

Second, someone must be available to teach the skill or area of knowledge. This may be someone in the player character's community or, if status points are being spent on education, it could be another NPC in the area. If the community is giving the training as part of the benefits of rank, the GM must consider the characteristics of the community. A very primitive community may be able to teach most skills, but will have little knowledge to offer. Restorationists would be able and very willing to teach Ancient Language and Ancient Culture and History to new members; Programmers would teach Ancient Language and Literacy, but their version of Ancient Culture and History would be so fictionalized as to be worthless. If an NPC outside the community is providing the training, he or she would want to be paid something besides status points (the status point charge is intended to prevent characters from simply buying training any time they get some money, although that is another option some GMs may want to consider).

If the community provides training as a benefit of rank, it will provide that training to further its own aims, and not primarily for the self-aggrandizement of the character. Thus, a low-ranking character in a fairly militaristic clan (or among Bonapartists) would probably be taught Fighting With Weapons skill or possibly Weaponsmaking skill without regard for his own wishes. On the other hand, if the community were short of specialists like

spies or combat medics, the character might be taught Underground/Black Market or Human Physiology and Medicine, again with no option except (possibly) take it or leave it. The GM could use these considerations to justify training party members in the skills and knowledge that they will need most in his or her opinion. As characters advance in rank, the GM could give them more latitude to pick and choose. In any case, the community will expect the characters to use the skills and knowledge provided to help the community from time to time. With knowledge comes responsibility.

Finally, characters must be capable of learning and using the skills and knowledge they seek. Most skills require at least two hands or other manipulative members, and most areas of knowledge are optimally useful only if the character has the power of speech. These two limitations will exclude many mutated animal characters from many skills and areas of knowledge.

Beyond this, the GM must use common sense, for there are too many considerations involved in each skill and area of knowledge to list them all here, one example should suffice. Riding skill requires two hands but it also requires that the character be essentially bipedal and erect. A giant lobster which has a pair of mutated hands will still not be able to ride a horse. Riders must be no more than half as heavy as the mount (one-third as heavy as a flying mount) and no less than one-fifteenth as heavy, a three-meter, 350 kg humanoid can ride nothing smaller than a brutorz, while a 15 kg monkey could not expect to control a centisteed. The GM might also want to set a minimum DX for Riding skill (7 or 8 is suggested).

Player characters may wish to share their skills and knowledge by training fellow party members during the course of the campaign. This will be simpler to referee if the GM has been using the status-point charge system rather than the rank system. The GM could simply require that a character earn the set number of status points before he can learn a skill or area of knowledge from another player character. Alternately, if the GM wants to retain complete control over the spread of skills and knowledge, he or she might rule that training other characters requires special skills beyond those that the character mastered when he learned the skill or knowledge itself.

If the GM does allow PCs to teach each other, it should be noted that this will take time. It could be done during "off hours," so not to take away from adventuring, but some time would elapse before the student would fully master the skill or knowledge. Interparty training like this may be the only way mutated animal characters will ever learn skills or knowledge, unless the party is affiliated with a community that treats animals as complete equals.

# The Marvel<sup>®</sup> - Phile

## *Riders on the storm*

**by Jeff Grubb**

What's in a name? Follow this logic and see what we come up with.

Once upon a time in the Old West, there was a crusading hero, dressed in pale, glowing garb, who rode a white horse. This was Carter Slade, the original Ghost Rider™. When Carter was slain by outlaws, Carter's brother Lincoln took up the costume and continued the tradition. Eventually, the Ghost Rider retired from his crusades against gunslinging desperadoes as the west grew more civilized.

A century later, a motorcycle stuntman named Johnny Blaze™, messing with occult forces best left alone, had his soul bonded to an evil extradimensional creature named Zarathos™. This dual being, also known as Ghost Rider, served both good and evil until Blaze broke loose of his personal demon and Zarathos was imprisoned (until his recent reprieve by the Beyonder™ — but that is another story).

While this Ghost Rider was still active, a hero wearing the costume of the original

western hero appeared. This was Hamilton Slade, great-great-grandson of Lincoln Slade, who was possessed by the spirit of his ancestor. This Ghost Rider was known as Night Rider™ until recently, when the freeing of Johnny Blaze from his curse left the name open, and Night Rider became Ghost Rider.

All clear? I thought not. Here, then, are all the men who possessed the name, mantle, or both, of the Ghost Rider.

### **GHOST RIDER™ I and II** **Carter and Lincoln Slade**

(The abilities of these two men were identical.)

Fighting: GOOD (10)  
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)  
Strength: TYPICAL (6)  
Endurance: GOOD (10)  
Reason: TYPICAL (6)  
Intuition: GOOD (10)  
Psyche: EXCELLENT (20)

Health: 46

Karma: 36

Resources: Typical (for 1870-1890)

Popularity: 20 (from 1870-1890)

**Known powers:** Neither of the Slade brothers had any known super-human powers.

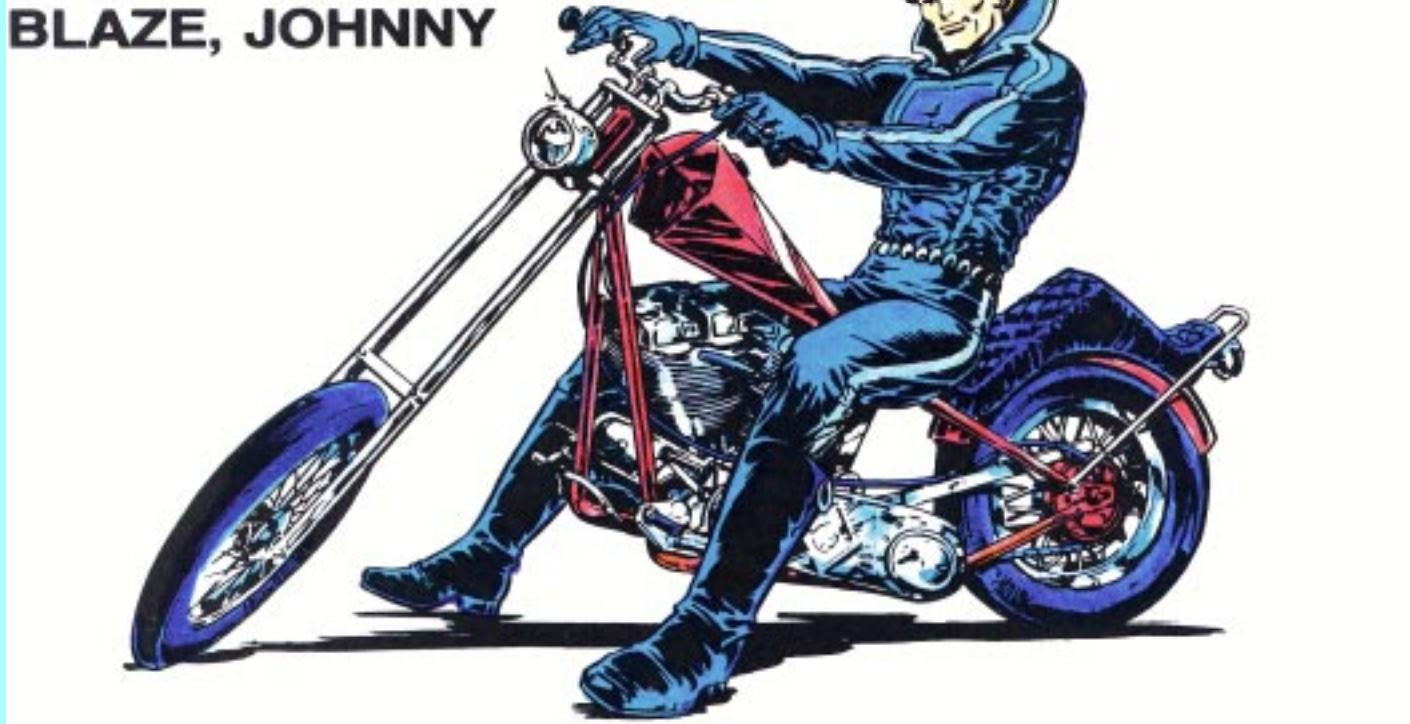
#### **Talents:**

**MARKSMANSHIP:** Both brothers were expert marksmen. Their Agility was Remarkable with all forms of guns, but the preferred weapon of the Ghost Rider was a Navy Colt .44 6-shot cap-and-ball revolver (treat as a normal handgun).

**HORSEMANSHIP:** Both brothers were expert horsemen. Their Agilities were Remarkable when performing FEATs with horses, and their horses' Agilities were raised by one column for FEATs as well.



## **BLAZE, JOHNNY**



**LAW ENFORCEMENT:** (Lincoln only) Lincoln Slade was a United States Marshal, and had authorization in his civilian identity to make arrests in the southwest territories of the United States.

**The Slade brothers' stories:** Carter Slade was a school master in the Southwest, during its early days of settlement. Gunned down by outlaws, Carter was found by a friendly band of Comanche Indians, whose medicine man, Flaming Star, nursed him back to health. Flaming Star had received a mystic vision from the Comanche sky-spirit, a vision which identified Slade as a champion for justice. Carter was healed and given a chalk-white costume of a ghostly cowboy, impregnated with glowing dust that Flaming Star found in an meteorite. As Ghost Rider, Carter became a legend in the Southwest as a champion for justice, until his death at the hands of outlaws.

With Carter Slade's death, his brother, U.S. Marshal Lincoln Slade, took up the costume and continued the legend of the Ghost Rider until his retirement. Slade and another hero of the old west, the Two-Gun Kid™, encountered Hawkeye™ the Archer on one of the latter's trips into the past.

## GHOST RIDER™ III

### Johnny Blaze

Fighting: GOOD (10)/REMARKABLE (30)

Agility: EXCELLENT (20)/REMARKABLE (30)

Strength: TYPICAL (6)/INCREDIBLE (40)

Endurance: EXCELLENT (20)/AMAZING (50)

Reason: TYPICAL (6)/GOOD (10)

Intuition: TYPICAL (6)/EXCELLENT (20)

Psyche: REMARKABLE (30)/REMARKABLE (30)

Health: 56/150

Karma: 42/60

Resources: Poor

Popularity: 5/10

### Known powers:

**ALTER EGO:** The abilities listed to the left of the slash are for Johnny Blaze in his normal human form. The abilities to the right of the slash are for the Zarathos/Blaze composite being. All of Ghost Rider's known powers belonged to this composite form. Ghost Rider's talents apply to the human Blaze form alone. Blaze could transform from one form to another, with no carryover of damage, but Blaze found this a painful experience (Endurance FEAT required on returning to human state, or unconsciousness for 1-10 turns results).

**HELLFIRE:** This is a mystic form of fire used by Ghost Rider. Using this hellfire, Ghost Rider could perform several power stunts:

\*Create a fully functional flaming motor-

cycle in a single turn. This cycle had Amazing Speed, Incredible Body, and Incredible Control. It never required fuel, and could defy gravity for one turn, riding up vertical surfaces, making stunning leaps, etc.

\* Create walls of flame encircling a single area; the flame was of up to Amazing intensity

\* Throw fireballs of Amazing fire damage, up to four areas away.

\* Use a form of cold hellfire that would affect the human spirit. This cold hellfire inflicted no physical damage, but for each turn of use, the target made an Endurance FEAT or else permanently lost one rank of Psyche. This magical attack was of Amazing intensity. If the victim's Psyche was brought below Feeble, its spirit was lost and the irretrievable (in game terms, the character ceased to have any control over his actions and was retired from active play).

**BODY ARMOR:** Zarathos/Blaze's body was semi-tangible, such that most damage did not affect him. This provided Amazing protection from physical attacks, and Class 1000 protection against fire, heat, and radiation.

### Talents:

**CYCLIST:** Blaze's Agility is considered to be one column higher for FEATs involving motorcycles.

**OCCULT LORE:** Blaze has made an extensive study of the occult, in addition to his first-hand experience. His Reason is one column higher in matters of the occult. He has forsaken the active use of this knowledge following his experiences with Zarathos.

**Blaze's story:** Zarathos is one of the extradimensional beings known as demons, powerful entities that prey on human spirits and souls. Zarathos ruled a powerful empire of his worshipers in the prehistoric Southwest, until he was defeated and imprisoned by another demon known as Mephisto™. Mephisto kept Zarathos's spirit as a plaything and used him as a servant to harvest souls in this dimension.

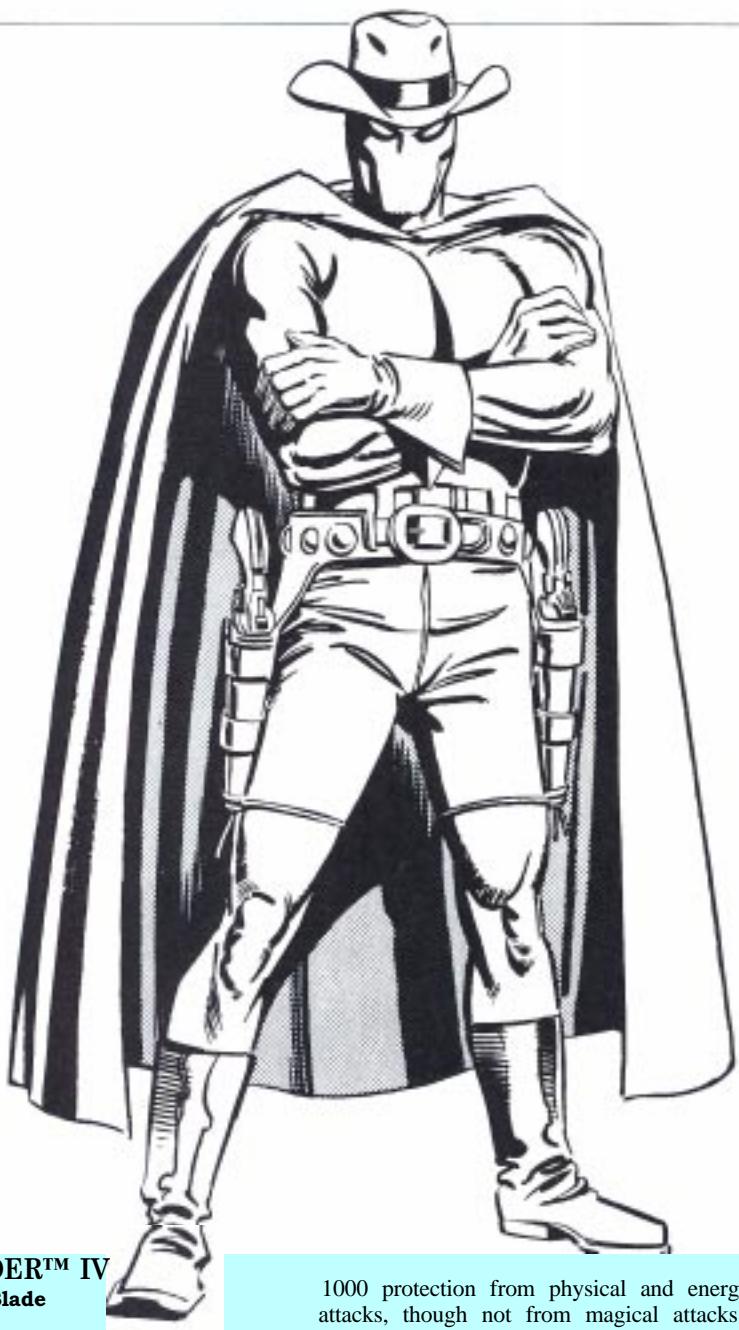
Meanwhile, Johnny Blaze, a stunt cyclist, discovered his stepfather Crash Simpson, star attraction of Crash Simpson's Daredevil Cycle Show, was dying of an unnamed blood disease. The young Blaze used his occult knowledge to summon Mephisto, and offered his soul in return for curing his stepfather of the disease. Mephisto agreed, but Crash soon died while attempting a dangerous stunt. (Mephisto had only promised protection against the disease.) Mephisto came to collect his due, but was driven off by Blaze's stepsister, Roxanne Simpson, who banished the creature using a spell from Blaze's occult books. Mephisto fled, but not



before he grafted the spirit of Zarathos to Blaze's own spirit.

The relationship between Blaze and Zarathos developed over time, and the start, Zarathos had no memory of his past, and Blaze assumed that the flaming wraith was a manifestation of his own evil. Later, Blaze developed command of his demonic form, and during this time he served with the Champions of Los Angeles™. At the end of their relationship, Zarathos was dominating Blaze's body at will, and it took all of Blaze's will power to restrain the creature.

Blaze was finally freed of his evil alter-ego in an encounter with Centurious™, an immortal Indian who was used as a pawn by Mephisto to topple Zarathos's early empire. In the battle between Blaze and Centurious, Blaze regained his own soul, and the spirits of Zarathos and Centurious were entrapped in a mystic crystal. Despite time off for good behavior provided by the Beyonder, Zarathos is believed to still be in that crystal. Blaze has retired from active performing, and is currently touring America with Roxanne Simpson.



## GHOST RIDER™ IV

**Hamilton Slade**

Fighting: TYPICAL (6)  
 Agility: GOOD (10)/EXCELLENT (20)  
 Strength: EXCELLENT (20)  
 Endurance: GOOD (10)/INCREDIBLE (40)  
 Reason: GOOD (10)  
 Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)  
 Psyche: TYPICAL (6)/REMARKABLE (30)

Health: 46/86

Karma: 36/60

Resources: Typical

Popularity: 5

### Known powers:

**ALTER EGO:** The abilities listed to the left of the slash are for Hamilton Slade in his normal form. The abilities to the right of the slash are for Slade when he is the Ghost Rider. Hamilton only possesses super powers in his Ghost Rider form

**PHASING:** As Ghost Rider, Slade may become intangible and pass through solid objects. While in this state, he has Class

1000 protection from physical and energy attacks, though not from magical attacks. Ghost Rider apparently has to breathe, so gas attacks affect him, and his phasing may only last as long as he holds his breath. This phasing allows him to walk on air, much in the same way the mutant Shadowcat™ does.

**INVISIBILITY:** Ghost Rider may make himself invisible in whole or in part. This invisibility is of Incredible power, and is not detectable in the infrared and ultraviolet ranges

**DETECTION OF EVIL:** Ghost Rider is called into being by the presence of evil nearby. The precise mechanism of this ability is unknown and is unreliable as well. (One of Ghost Rider's fellow Rangers™ turned out to be an evil demonic creature.) Upon detection of this "evil," the spirit of the Ghost Rider possesses Hamilton Slade, converting him into the Ghost Rider. The duration of this conversion is about six hours.

**MYSTIC SIX-SHOOTER:** Ghost Rider carries a ghostly version of the Navy Colt, which fires an unlimited supply of phantom bullets. These bullets inflict no physical damage, but a victim of the bullets must make an Endurance FEAT (against Incredible-strength stunning) or be knocked out for 1-10 turns. These bullets are intangible as well, and may be fired through solid objects. The range of these bullets is three areas.

**MYSTIC LARIAT** Ghost Rider may throw his lariat one area, and cause it to become intangible and pass through solid objects. The lariat is considered a grappling attack of Amazing strength, and is made of Amazing-strength mystic material.

**BANSHEE:** Ghost Rider's horse, Banshee, appears upon command, and has similar powers of intangibility. The horse never tires, and it may move three areas per turn.

**Ghost Rider's story:** Archeologist Hamilton Slade, great-great-grandson of Lincoln Slade, the second Ghost Rider, was exploring a cave beneath a Comanche burial mound when he was startled by the glowing form of the original Ghost Rider's garb rising from a burial urn. The spirit of the Ghost Rider took possession of Slade's body and, accompanied by Banshee, rode off to rescue Johnny Blaze, as Ghost Rider, from the magician Moondark™. Since that time, the existence of strong evil in Slade's vicinity induces the mystic transformation.

Taking the name of Night Rider, the possessed Slade was one of five heroes who answered the distress call of Rick Jones™, and aided him against the Corruptor™. These five, including Shooting Star™, Texas Twister™, Red Wolf™, and Firebird™, tried to form the super-powered team called the Rangers to protect the Southwest, but the mystic influences of Shooting Star, who was in reality a demon from another plane, prevented them from remaining together long. Night Rider, now taking the Ghost Rider name back with the retirement of Johnny Blaze, answered Firebird's call to discover Shooting Star's true identity, and came into conflict with the West Coast Avengers™. Ghost Rider was bested by Hawkeye the Archer, and it was revealed that the demon that was Shooting Star had controlled their minds. Firebird remained with the West Coast team for a short while, and the remaining three Rangers returned to their own pursuits. To date, Hamilton Slade is not aware of his dual personality, and has no explanation for his memory lapses.

Next time, we introduce a new method of presenting heroes, move into the Advanced Set, and take a long shot in "Oh Lucky Man!"

# THE HERO SYSTEM WILL YOUR BLOCK KNOCK OFF!

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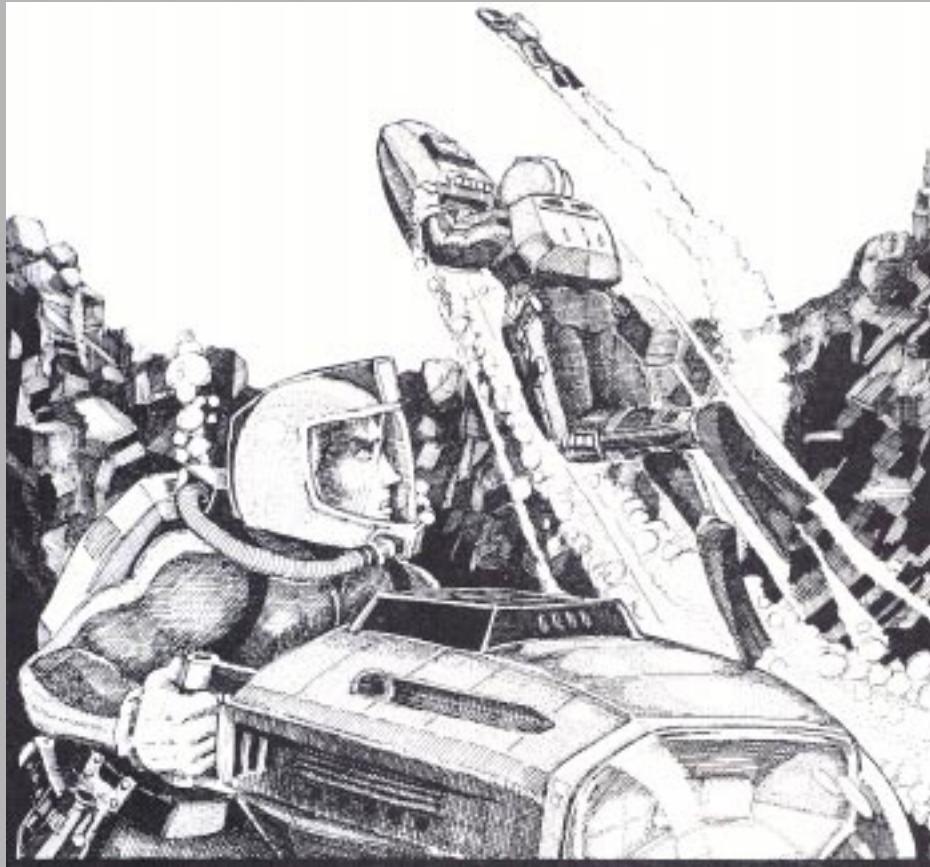
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# Going for a swim?



## *Underwater action in STAR FRONTIERS® gaming*

by William Tracy

During the course of a STAR FRONTIERS® campaign, a group of adventurers might want or need to enter an underwater environment. Unfortunately, the rule books contain no rules for underwater play. This article attempts to rectify that situation, and some additional equipment usable in undersea environments is also presented.

Using these rules, adventures could be created in which characters must reach an underwater city covered by a pressurized dome, escape from a damaged submarine, or swim in search of a sunken ship or

crashed spacecraft. They might also encounter a sentient race that lives underwater, and they could trade, fight, or otherwise interact with that race.

### Artificial gill suits

To survive underwater for long periods, characters must employ a breathing apparatus known as an artificial gill suit (AGS), which covers the wearer's entire body. It is made of a material that is similar to that used in skeinsuits, and it may be left transparent or colored as the manufacturer desires. Normal goggles may be worn by Humans, Vrusk, and Yazirian divers. The AGS will absorb one-fourth of all damage caused by projectile and gyrojet weapons,

fragmentation grenades, explosives, and melee weapons. It cannot be worn with any other suit of armor, but a screen may be used with it. When the AGS has taken 35 points of damage, it will be ruined and useless as armor.

The AGS for Humans, Yazirians, and Vrusks conforms to their basic physical shape. The AGS for Dralasites will stretch to accommodate their shape-changing abilities. A Yazirian AGS covers the glide-wing membranes without hampering their use in swimming (see below).

Much of the exterior of the AGS is covered by a series of microfilters, all made of tough, translucent plastic. These microfilters draw oxygen from the water, pumping the gas mixture through small tubes to the area of the body where the wearer inhales air. The waste gases produced are released directly from the suit. The whole system is regulated by a computer chip and powered by a small energy cell good for five hours before it needs to be recharged.

The AGS also has a small digital display which can easily be seen by the wearer. The display shows the diver's depth, time in the water, and the amount of power left in the suit's energy cell. The suit also has a built-in low-frequency radio system, which has a range of one kilometer.

The AGS weighs five kilograms and costs 800 Credits. The suit can be safely used at a maximum depth of 110 meters on Earth-like planets. If a deeper dive is attempted, there is a cumulative 5% chance per 10 meters below the safe limit that the AGS will malfunction. This chance must be rolled for every five minutes, with an additional 1% chance of failure added for every additional five-minute period spent beyond the first.

The wearer will also take one point of damage for every 10 meters he dives past the maximum safe depth. This damage will be taken every minute and is caused by increased pressure. Dralasites will not start taking pressure damage until they reach a depth of 160 meters, due to their elastic abilities.

There is also a 10% cumulative chance per 10 meters of depth beyond the maximum safe limit, checked for every 10 minutes, that a Human or Yazirian character will have vivid hallucinations for five minutes as a result of nitrogen narcosis. A check against the character's Logic score lets him disbelieve the hallucinations.

If the AGS malfunctions, the character wearing it must hold his breath until he can reach the water's surface. A character can hold his breath for a number of turns equal to the character's Stamina score divided by five. If the character is still underwater after running out of breath, the character will take 2d10 damage for every turn spent under water until death occurs from drowning.

If a character dives deeper than 10

meters, the character must ascend slowly (at a rate of five meters per turn) or risk getting a case of the bends. Rends are caused by nitrogen bubbles forming in the bloodstream, due to the quick change in pressure. This can cause intense pain, doing one point of damage per round until the character is placed in a freeze field or a decompression chamber to stop the loss of Stamina points. The damage from decompression will never exceed 40 points, though death can still occur as a result of it. Note that there is a chance of dying as a result of the bends, independent of the amount of damage taken, as per the table below. Dralasites do not get the bends.

has a sharp instrument with which to free himself).

If a character swims through areas containing coral reefs, he must swim at a reduced rate of five meters per turn. Faster speeds allow for a 10% chance per turn traveled that the character will be cut by the sharp edges of the coral, causing 1d10 damage (half of which can be absorbed by an AGS suit).

Another factor that might affect movement is the presence of underwater currents. Such currents usually have speeds ranging from 1-12 meters per turn, but they can only be found at a depth of 60 meters or less. Characters may enter a current on purpose to increase their

ters. If the characters want larger or armed submarines, they must either be working with the government or willing to acquire one illegally. A typical explorer submarine costs 20,000 Credits, but usually rents for 100 Credits, plus a 250-Credit deposit, per day. The submarine has a top speed of 250 kilometers per hour, with an average cruising speed of 20 kilometers per hour. Six passengers may be accommodated aboard it, though in VERY cramped comfort. The sub carries four in relative comfort. The cargo limit is 1000 kilograms, within a space of two cubic meters.

This submarine is powered by a parabattery (type II) which has to be recharged every 200 hours of use. The submarine's movement rates are not affected by coral reefs or seaweed, though visibility is affected.

This type of submarine can be used to a maximum depth of 200 meters. If it is used at greater depths, there is a cumulative 10% chance per 10 meters below the maximum depth that the submarine will spring a leak. This chance should be checked for every five minutes spent below the maximum depth. If a leak occurs, a person with Technical skills can repair it, but first the submarine must move to the surface. If the leak is not fixed, the submarine fills with water in 10 minutes. The submarine contains six AGS suits in case of emergencies, but donning one in a cramped, sinking submarine can be tricky.

Structural damage of 100 points or more to one area will cause a leak in the sub, which has a total of 400 structural points. If a submarine is involved in undersea combat, a referee might want to create a modified form of the Vehicle Damage Table, found on page 32 of the Expanded Game Rules book, which would cover the sub's specific shape and details.

## Chances for contracting the bends

| Rate of ascent | Chance to get bends | Chance of death |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 6 m/turn       | 10%                 | 8%              |
| 7 m/turn       | 40%                 | 16%             |
| 8 m/turn       | 60%                 | 24%             |
| 9 m/turn       | 80%                 | 32%             |
| 10+ m/turn     | 100%                | 40%             |

If death is indicated, it will occur in 10 minutes. During these 10 minutes, the character will lose one-tenth of his current hit point value (rounded up) every minute. This procedure can be stopped by a freeze field or a decompression chamber.

A character must stay in a decompression chamber for a number of minutes equal to the lowest depth in meters that the character reached. If a character dives below 60 meters, even if he did not contract the bends, he must spend some time in a decompression chamber. If the character does not do this, he will get a case of the bends, like that described above, within 1d5 hours.

Dralasite characters will never contract the bends due to their unique physiology. If characters need to dive deeper than their limits, they will have to use a submarine or an AGS designed for greater depths.

## Movement

Characters can swim at a rate of 10 meters per turn (or one kilometer per hour). If a character swims longer than one hour, he will lose five Stamina points for every 30 minutes he continues swimming. These movement rates can be affected by obstacles such as seaweed or coral (or alien equivalents thereof).

If a character swims through seaweed, he must move at a rate of four meters per turn. If a character tries to move faster than that, he may become entangled (a cumulative 10% per every turn of movement). This should be checked for every third turn. The character will be entangled for 1d10 turns (1d5 if the character

speed. To get out of a current, a character must roll his Strength (minus 2% per meter/turn of speed the current has) or less on percentile dice. The character can attempt to leave the current once every five minutes. After a number of attempts equal to the character's Stamina score divided by five and rounded down, the character must rest 30 minutes before making any more attempts to escape the current.

The characters' movement rates might also be increased with special equipment, such as jet scooters, jet fins, and submarines. A jet scooter is a streamlined cylinder made of light alloys, one meter in width and two meters long. It has a built-in jet turbine which enables it to go 20 meters per turn. The character lies on top of the scooter and steers it with a steering rod, which controls small fins on the sides of the scooter. The scooter weighs five kilograms and costs 300 Credits. It is powered by a small rechargeable energy cell, which can power the scooter for five consecutive hours.

Jet fins work on the same principle as the scooter. Jet fins enable a character to move at a rate of 13 meters per turn without requiring rest breaks every hour. A pair of fins weigh .5 kilograms and cost 50 Credits. They are powered by two small, rechargeable energy cells good for two hours of use.

A submarine can also be used by the characters, but it can only be operated by a Technician with a skill level of five or better. This article will describe the most common type of submarine, which can be bought or rented by non-military charac-

## Character effects

The characters will be entering a new type of environment beneath the sea, and will be affected by it mentally and physically. First of all, a character's ability scores change while underwater. A character's Dexterity and Reaction Speed scores are reduced by 25 points; also, a character's Strength score is reduced by 35 points when figuring the effects of melee on the Punching Table (page 25, Expanded Games Rules). A minimum score of 10 applies in all cases.

The STAR FRONTIERS races are each affected differently by the underwater environment. Dralasites do not care for adventuring undersea, because the AGS does not let them use their senses of touch and smell. They are not greatly affected by increases in pressure (and never get the bends). Humans are not bothered by the new environment, but Vrusks are very

nervous underwater. Vrusks swim awkwardly and, when dealing with underwater races, a Vrusk's chance to comprehend social dealings is halved. Yazirians are uneasy at first, but they come to enjoy swimming because it is somewhat like gliding. Their glider membranes grant them great maneuverability while underwater. This will be discussed later.

A character's skills and their results are also affected while underwater. The effects on Weapon skills is discussed later. The Demolitions skills work as long as the timers used are built to work underwater. Blast radii are doubled due to the increased powers of shock waves underwater. The Martial Arts skill will work underwater with a 30% reduction on the success rate. Technician skills work if the equipment and tools are designed to work underwater. Environmental skills work normally underwater if they apply to the situation. There will be a 20% reduction on their success rates while underwater. None of the Medical skills work underwater, except for Diagnosis which has a 30% reduction on the success rate. All Psycho-Social skills work when applicable, with a 30% reduction on success rates due to communications problems.

## Underwater combat

While underwater, characters will have to deal with various modifications to the combat system. The Ranged Weapon Combat Procedure Table, on page 22 of the Expanded Game Rules book, should have the following additions and modifications when combat occurs underwater.

|                             | Weapon | PB | Short | Med. | Long | Extr. |
|-----------------------------|--------|----|-------|------|------|-------|
| Swimming target             |        |    | -5    |      |      |       |
| Dodging target              |        |    | -8    |      |      |       |
| Dodging Yazirian target     |        |    | -10   |      |      |       |
| Target using jet fins       |        |    | -3    |      |      |       |
| Target riding jet scooter   |        |    | -6    |      |      |       |
| Attacker using jet fins     |        |    | -2    |      |      |       |
| Attacker riding jet scooter |        |    | -5    |      |      |       |

Sighting distance is also modified while underwater. The AGS is designed to enhance the wearer's vision so that it is not distorted. Even so, a character's vision will not be as good as when on the surface. Visual range can also be affected by the amount of sediment and plankton in the area, the amount of light shining on the surface of the water, the depth, and passing schools of fish or other lifeforms.

It can be assumed that within 10 meters of the surface, a character will have a maximum visual range of 40 meters, if the view is not obstructed and if it is daylight. If it is at night, the character will only be able to see one meter away at best. The referee should use this as a basic foundation when trying to decide a character's visual range underwater. The final visual range is left up to the referee.

For 50 Credits, a wide-beam underwater

flashlight can be found. The flashlight will be attached to the AGS, around the character's chest. The flashlight's energy cell can go for 100 hours before needing a recharge. The flashlight enables the character to always have a minimum visual range of two meters, except in extremely murky water. It illuminates a cone-shaped area, ranging from .5-2 meters at the widest part of the cone.

When fighting underwater, characters must use modified versions of the ranged weapons they usually use. These weapons cost 50 Credits extra for underwater modification. Such weapons act normally above water unless otherwise noted. Laser weapons are not used underwater, as they are too inefficient.

Underwater versions of gyrojet weapons are available. When used underwater, they have the following alterations made in ranges (the rest of the statistics are normal when used underwater).

| Weapon            | Short | Med. | Long | Extr.  |
|-------------------|-------|------|------|--------|
| Gyrojet<br>pistol | —     | 0-3  | 4-30 | 31-60  |
| Gyrojet<br>rifle  | —     | 0-3  | 4-50 | 51-90  |
|                   |       |      |      | 91-130 |

Sonic disruptors and sonic stunners are both produced in versions that can be used underwater. These weapons have double normal ranges undersea, because of the effects of the denser medium through which the sound waves pass. The damage for the sonic disruptors is doubled accordingly.

Modified versions of grenades can be used underwater. They can't actually be thrown, but they may be dropped on characters that are at a greater depth than the attacker. Unless surprised, the victim may be able to get out of the grenade's blast radius. The grenades will drop at a rate of six meters per turn. Grenades can also be delivered with grenade rifles modified to work underwater. Such weapons have the following ranges when used underwater: PB — Nil, Short — 0-15, Medium — 16-30, Long — 31-55, Extreme — 56-100. Underwater grenades will not work in air, but the grenade rifle can fire the regular type of grenades when used on land.

Underwater versions of the poison grenade and the doze grenade can be found, but they only have a blast radius of one meter. They release a colorless liquid into the water, which enters the micro-filters of an AGS and then affect the wearer as per normal. For 50 Credits, special filters can be attached to an AGS which will keep poisons from getting to its wearer.

Underwater versions of tangler grenades and smoke grenades can also be found. They work like the regular ones, but they only have a one-meter blast radius. The smoke cloud produced by the

smoke grenade has only a 15-meter blast radius, clouding the water, and it could be broken up by underwater currents.

The underwater version of the fragmentation grenade works just like the regular version, except that it only has a three-meter blast radius.

Finally, underwater characters may make use of a new projectile weapon: the spear gun, which uses compressed air to shoot a heavy arrow. A compressed-air clip can fire four arrows before becoming empty. The spear can be fitted with a special head that explodes upon impact like a grenade. A regular spear does 1d10 damage, while a spear with an exploding head does 2d10 damage. The spear gun has the following ranges: PB — 0-5, Short — 6-10, Medium — 11-20, Long — 21-30, Extreme — 31-40. A cost and weight table follows:

| Device              | Cost  |                           |
|---------------------|-------|---------------------------|
|                     | (Cr.) | Weight(Kg)                |
| Spear gun           | 100   | 4                         |
| Spear/arrow         | 5     | 1 (for 5 spears)          |
| Compressed air clip | 10    | 1 (for 3 clips)           |
| Exploding warhead   | 1     | (for 3 spears with heads) |
|                     | 30    |                           |

Melee combat is also greatly affected while underwater. Characters cause no damage with punches, and a character's punching score should not be added to the damage caused by non-powered weapons while underwater. Only sharp melee weapons are useful underwater: short axes, knives, stabbing polearms (spears), sonic knives, sonic swords, short stabbing swords, and vibro-knives. A person using a sonic weapon underwater will not be able to surprise an opponent. The damage done by these weapons is reduced by half because of the friction of the water. These modified versions of melee weapons cost 30 Credits extra and function normally above water. Electrical weapons are not produced for underwater use because water is such a good conductor for electricity. Modified power screens that work above and below water cost 100 Credits extra for the water-proofing.

Final notes: Any combat which draws blood might also draw any nearby predators in the area (like sharks or beings with similar temperaments and appetites). While refereeing underwater combat, a referee should take into account the different altitudes of the combatants; those attacking from above gain a +5 bonus. A referee might wish to use the rules for weightless combat (page 26 of the Expanded Game Rules book) when conducting underwater combat, if high-recoil weapons are used without bracing.

## Underwater equipment

When going underwater, characters can take a variety of equipment modified to

work in that environment. A waterproofed compass can be found for 20 Credits. A special underwater flashlight, which works like the one attached to the AGS, can be bought for 10 Credits. An underwater version of the toxyrad gauge costs 25 Credits; its functions are slightly different from the regular type, and it will not work above water. If the red light shines, it means that there is a chemical in the area that can affect the character through his AGS, but the special filters mentioned earlier can filter them out before they reach the character. A flashing blue light indicates that there is dangerous radiation nearby. A flashing yellow light indicates that there is a chemical in the area that is so powerful that even the special filters mentioned above can not filter them out.

An underwater version of the exoskeleton can be found for 2500 Credits; this version also works above water. While wearing the exoskeleton, a character is able to swim 20 meters per turn without having to rest. While underwater, the character has a +10 bonus to hit in melee, and does five additional points of damage. The exoskeleton is designed to be worn outside the AGS without hampering any of the suit's functions.

Because of the heat-absorbing properties of water, an AGS cannot have built-in

infrared vision capability. Freeze fields cannot work underwater, either.

An underwater radiophone can be bought for 550 Credits, and will work regularly above water. It only has a range of 50 kilometers underwater, and is connected to the communications system of the user's AGS.

Underwater Solva-Way comes in small plastic bulbs which must be crushed by the entangled victim. It then spreads out and dissolve the threads, remaining potent for one turn. A bulb of underwater Solva-Way costs 15 Credits, and it will not work above water.

Regular Tornadium D-19 works underwater, but special waterproofed Variable/Timer Detonators must be used. They cost 7 Credits each and work above water, too.

Finally, special power backpacks (300 Credits) and powerclips (150 Credits) can be bought that work underwater.

### Final notes

This article assumes that the area where the characters are diving has a fairly comfortable climate. If the characters dive in water with extremes in temperature, an AGS can be bought with a heating/cooling system. This modification costs 100 Credits extra and adds two kilograms of weight to the AGS. This system is powered

by a small energy cell which works for four hours before needing a recharge. The system protects the character in water with temperatures ranging from -35°C to 70°C.

Special AGSs may be created if the characters are going to dive in waters which contain dangerous chemicals or poison. These AGS must be tailor-made for the body of water in which the characters are going to dive. Such suits cost and average of 1000 Credits.

The modified weapons and equipment mentioned earlier have a tendency to malfunction due to powerful pressure from deep dives, as do AGSs. Weapons and equipment must be further modified if taken into water containing powerful chemicals; this modification will cost a further 50 Credits.

The natural gravity of a planet will also effect the pressure at deeper depths. For every tenth of a gravity less than one, the AGS is able to dive 10 meters deeper before a chance for malfunction occurs. The opposite is true if the gravity is greater than one. This rule applies to the weapons and equipment, too.

This article may be used as the basic foundation for running an adventure underwater. It should not be considered a strict set of rules. The final judgements are up to the individual referee.



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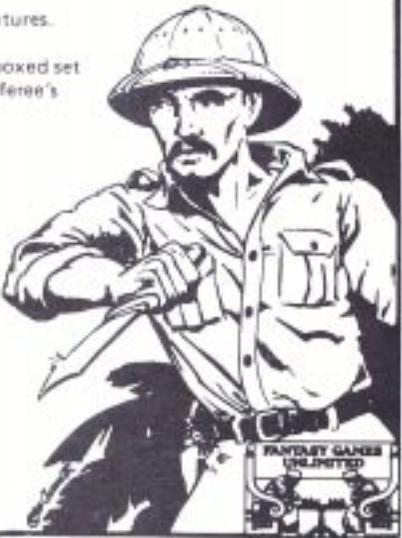
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**Objectives:** Get rich and powerful without regard for the Computer or law and order. Gain control of all illegal operations in Alpha Complex. Make lots of friends, so you can use them as scapegoats, stool pigeons, and muscle. Be loyal

to your Family, and your Godfather. Rule by fear. Take bloody vengeance on all who oppose you. Be extremely familiar with all sorts of weapons, especially archaic

Thompson sub-machine guns. Destroy all other criminal organizations. Sin all you want, but do it in style. Use The Computer.

**Doctrines:** If you didn't commit crime, somebody else would, and it is definitely better that you do it. Everyone is a little crooked — even The Computer. Everyone has a price. The Computer is a useful tool and need not be destroyed. Only the Family is all-important. Never trust anyone who seems overly friendly or who kisses you on the cheek. Never trust Communists. Extortion, theft, assault, graft, murder, and racketeering are simply normal business concerns, and business is business concerns, and business is business.

**Friends:** Spies for other Alpha Complexes, Death Leopard, Computer Phreaks, and the Romantics.

**Enemies:** Illuminati, Communists, PURGE, and all other criminal groups.

**General description:** Most crime societies are led by one boss (or godfather, level 8), followed by one underboss (rank



7). Next are the counselors (rank 6), usually only one or two of them unless the "Family" is particularly large. Five or so lieutenants are next (rank 5), with the soldiers filling out the lower ranks.

The boss is the leader of the "Family" and what he says, goes, no questions asked. Absolute obedience and respect must be shown to the boss. The underboss leads the "Family" when the boss is gone "on business" or is "sick." Counselors act as advisors to the boss and underboss, and never advance beyond level 6 unless the boss allows it to happen (if he starts another branch of the "Family" elsewhere and needs another underboss, for instance). Anyone who wants to infiltrate a "Family" usually becomes friends with a counselor first.

Lieutenants lead soldiers on "business trips:" such as checking out local operations, ensuring protection money is paid promptly, and having "concerned discussions" with rival mobs, often leading to "abrupt and satisfactory termination of problems." Soldiers do all the dirty work for the "Family" and their boss appreciates this -though at times the boss may use soldiers as scapegoats if anything goes seriously wrong.

Though The Computer says that crime does not exist in Alpha Complex, crime societies see to it that crime continues as normal. Assassinations ("health alterations"), kidnappings ("personnel acquisitions"), theft ("material acquisitions"), armed assaults on rival criminal mobs ("concerned discussions"), and the selling of Alpha Complex secrets to certain groups ("routine information exchanges") are but a few "business concerns" of organized crime.

The members of organized crime carefully plan each criminal act before it is put into action. This is done to insure that Internal Security and The Computer do not find out about the crime before it occurs. Two to five criminals actually commit any one crime, while five to ten others hang back as guards and lookouts, making sure that the crime proceeds without interruption. Any traitor who backs out at the last minute from a crime is "reprimanded" and replaced.

Organized crime collects its funds from ransoms taken for kidnapped victims, con games, fraud, fencing stolen goods, protection and extortion, and selling Alpha Complex secrets. Whole accounting divisions must be employed to keep tabs on the income, which is extreme. Goods are usually acquired by theft or swindling.

Secretive crimes are much preferred over public ones, as it shows more style and avoids having Internal Security perform a "personnel audit" on one's organization. Of course, a "public discussion" with a rival mob, if performed without a clue as to the identities of those who performed the "discussion," is considered

instructive and classy.

Any member of the "Family" who is caught is on his own. If he is smart, he will immediately claim to be a member of another secret society. The "Family" will regretfully terminate all contact with the member who has "gone on vacation:" as most crimes in Alpha Complex are punishable by death.

#### Advancement:

Soldiers can rise in rank normally until rank 4, whereupon he must wait for an opening to become a lieutenant. Similarly, lieutenants must wait before becoming counselors, and so forth. An INDIGO clearance is required before one can become a counselor, and a counselor must be very well liked by his boss to become the next underboss.

As patience is not one of organized crime's strong points, superiors may find themselves having a "friendly business lunch" with one or more subordinates who wish to discuss "mutual concerns over promotion." Such luncheons may be happily resolved by having the superior "retire for health reasons," or else "regretfully terminate his employment."

Points are awarded as follows:

- \* +1 for "persuading" a group to help you or the "Family"
- \* +1 for using a scapegoat successfully ("cleaning house")

\* +2 for "successfully resolving a business discussion with a rival competitor" (involving the untimely and regretful death of one person)

\* +3 for "convincing a rival organization to cease operations entirely" (involving the untimely and regretful deaths of most or all personnel of the competitor)

Points may also be lost for lying to a higher-ranked person (-1), becoming a registered mutant (-2), or betraying the "Family" (loss of all points). In the latter event, the traitor may find himself in an "employment termination session" conducted with extreme prejudice.

**Special Rules:** Most organized crime members act like gangsters from old movies acquired through the Romantics. Some say that organized crime in Alpha Complexes has always existed, but others say that they were started by Romantics looking for excitement, or by Death Leopard members looking for fun. Both of the latter groups are useful to organized crime syndicates as information outlets and as mercenary muscle.

All crime "Families" have a cover, pretending to be some perfectly legitimate business venture. Anyone questioning the legitimacy of any crime syndicate's cover may have an enlightening "business lunch" with Alfredo-D-HUMP or Jack-D-RIPR.

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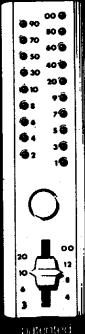
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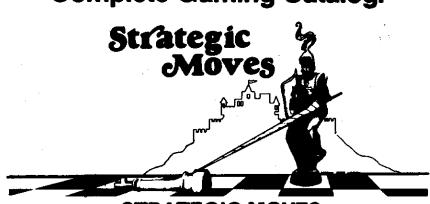
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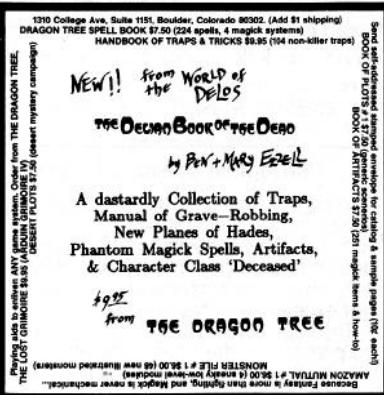
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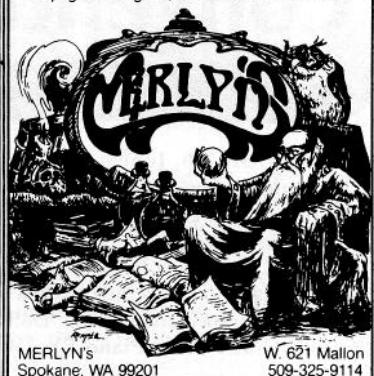
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## Dragon damage

(From page 44)

Damage values gradually increase from small size to huge, and from very young age to ancient (age categories A to C). The official bite damage for any dragon type is used in the tables as age category B and average size. Official claw damage is set as age category B and small size, since I consider the official claw-damage values too slight for any but the smallest dragons.

Once a Dungeon Master understands how the tables progress, he or she can tinker with the values to create a damage progression system suitable for the DM's own campaign. The idea behind these tables can be applied to any type of dragon — official or not — that may be encountered in the campaign. Remember that claw damage should not fall below 1-3 hit points for any dragon, nor should bite attack damage be set at less than 1-6 hit points.

The unusual damage ranges in the tables are derived as follows: 3-10 is d8 + 2; 3-12 is d10 + 2; 3-14 is d12 + 2; 4-14 is 2d6 + 2; 6-42 is 4d10 + 2; and 7-28 is 3d8 + 4.

Tables I and II list the revised damage values for the *Monster Manual II* and *Fiend Folio* dragons, respectively.

Some of these dragons also have a tail-swipe attack. The tail attack is listed as the fourth attack in a dragon's attack sequence. The base damage for the tail attack, like that for the bite attack, is listed in the tables under age category B and average size. Tail attack damage progresses in the tables just as the claw and bite attack damage value progresses. Those dragons possessing a tail-swipe attack are the cloud and mist dragons, and the shen lung (spirit dragon). Two additional dragons are added to this table, taken from the *Oriental Adventures* book: the chiang lung (river) and tun mi lung (typhoon) dragons.

Table III revises the damage done by the neutral dragons created by Arthur W. Collins for DRAGON issue #37. These gemstone-colored creatures are included in this revision system in the hope that greater interest will be generated for these novel dragons. Damage does not increase so dramatically for the neutral dragons because of their small size. An improved damage potential for the ruling Ruby Dragon is also described, to keep all the figures in proper perspective.

# Convention Calendar

## DALLAS CON '86, June 6-8

This gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Events will include AD&D® tournaments, Cars Wars, Champions, Star Fleet Battles, and miniature games. For details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Dallas Con '86, 3304 Crater Lane, Plano TX 75023.

## GLATHRICON GAMEFEST '86, June 6-8

This convention will be staged at the Ramada Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guests of honor will be Bob Blake, Penny Petticord, and Frank Mentzer. Scheduled activities include RPGA™ tournaments, a variety of role-playing games, a painting contest, and a masquerade. Registration fees are \$12. Preregistration fees for tournaments are \$2. For more details, contact: River City Science Fiction Association, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737.

## METROPOLICON, June 7

This gaming convention will be staged at the Auraria campus of Metropolitan State College. Featured activities will include role-playing game tournaments, computer gaming, and videos. Registration fees are \$10. For more details, contact: Auraria Gamers' Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th Street, Denver CO 80204.

## WARGAMERS WEEKEND, June 7-8

This wargaming convention will be held at the Disabled American Veterans Hall in Newburyport, Mass. Offering the finest in historical games, this event will also include many role-playing and board games. For inquiries on registration or on running game events, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Newburyport Wargamers Association, P.O. Box 148, Newburyport MA 09150.

## ADVENTURE GAMEFEST '86, June 13-15

This convention will be held at the Dolphin Beach Resort in St. Petersburg, Fla. Registration fees are \$15. For more information, contact: Adventure Game Fest, c/o Skirmishes, Inc., 2550 34th Ave. N., St. Petersburg FL 33713

## SEAGA '86, June 20-22

This gaming convention will be staged at the Airport Sheraton Hotel in Atlanta, Ga. Tournaments will be offered for a variety of fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games. Registration fees are \$12 until June 19, and \$15 at the door. Send your mail-in orders to: SEAGA '86, P.O. Box 16564, Atlanta GA 30321.

## RIVER CITY CON, June 28-29

This convention will take place on the Consumnes River College campus. Events featured will be a Car Wars and an AD&D® tournaments. There will be many other role-playing games and board games available. Other activities will include an auction and local vendors' area. Registration fees are \$5 per day of attendance; these fees can be mailed in until June 16. For more details, contact: River City Con, 3950 Mack Road #65, Sacramento CA 95823.

## NYCLONE, July 11-13

This convention will be staged at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Brunswick, N. J. Guest of honor will be Alexis Gilliland; other guests will include Sharon Green, Brian Wilkes, and Susan Shwartz. Registration fees are \$25. For more details about this event, contact: NYClone, P.O. Box 608, Belle Mead NJ 08502.

## COLONIAL CITY GAMEFEST '86, July 12-13

This convention will be staged at the Memorial Building in Mt. Vernon, Ohio. All types of games, miniatures events, and a model painting contest will be offered. For more details, contact: The Mt. Vernon Gamers' Association, 205 W. Gambier St., Mt. Vernon OH 43050.

## SPOKON '86, July 18-20

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ridpath Hotel in Spokane, Wash. For more information about this convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: S.A.I.F., P.O. Box 9582, Spokane WA 99205.

## SSC JERSEY DEVILCON, July 18-20

To be held at Stockton State College in Pomona, N.J., this convention will feature a costume contest and a trivia contest. Preregistration fees are \$10, and registration fees are \$13. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Don Glidewell, Office of Campus Activities G-202, Stockton State College, Pomona NJ 08240.

## DOVERCON II, July 19-20

This convention will be staged at the Dover Municipal Building Auditorium in Dover, N. H. Featured events will include D&D® and AD&D® tournaments and Diplomacy events. Artwork and miniatures will be judged, and winners will be awarded. Dealer inquiries welcome. Registration fees are \$5 for single-day attendance, and \$8 for the weekend. For details, contact: DoverCon II, P.O. Box 622, Dover NH 03820.

## WINDSOR GAMEFEST IV, July 19-20

This convention will be held in Ambassador Hall at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario. Featured events include role-playing, miniatures and board games, free movies, and a dealers' area. Registration fees are \$10 in Canadian funds for a weekend pass, and \$7 in Canadian funds for a daily pass. For details, contact: WRPA Head Office, 584 Brighton Road, Windsor, Ontario, Canada N8N 2L6.

## ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR XII, July 25-27

This comics/gaming/science-fiction convention will be held at the Omni Hotel and Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Ga. Guests of honor include Ralph Bakshi, Boris Vallejo, Greg Hildebrandt, Stan Lee, Diane Duane, and Steve Jackson. Registration fees are \$29. For details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: A.F.F., P.O. Box 566, Marietta GA 30061.

### Convention Calendar Policies

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8½" by 11" paper. The contents of each listing must not exceed 70 words in length.

The information given in the listing must be prepared in the following format:

- 1) title and date (not to exceed 2 lines of printed matter),
- 2) site and location,
- 3) guests of honor (if applicable),
- 4) special events offered,
- 5) registration fees or attendance requirements,
- 6) address (telephone number optional) where additional information can be obtained.

### Sample listing:

#### EVERYCON, Aug. 1-3

This gaming event will take place in Nowhere, Ind. Fred Smith and Jane Doe are guests of honor. Role-playing games and miniatures events will be featured. Registration is free. For details, contact: EveryCon, P.O. Box 000, Nowhere IN 46000.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for this column and will be discarded. We reserve the right to edit listings, but we are not responsible for updating them.

All listings must be accompanied by a cover letter which includes both an address and a telephone number. We are not, though, responsible for incorrect information provided to this office. If a cover letter is not provided, the listing will not be printed. No call-in listings will be accepted.

Foreign and domestic listings are welcome.

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Kim Mohan, Convention Listings Coordinator, c/o DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example: The copy deadline for the August 1986 issue is the last Monday of June 1986.

For any questions related to the Convention Calendar, please contact Mr. Mohan at (414) 248-3625.

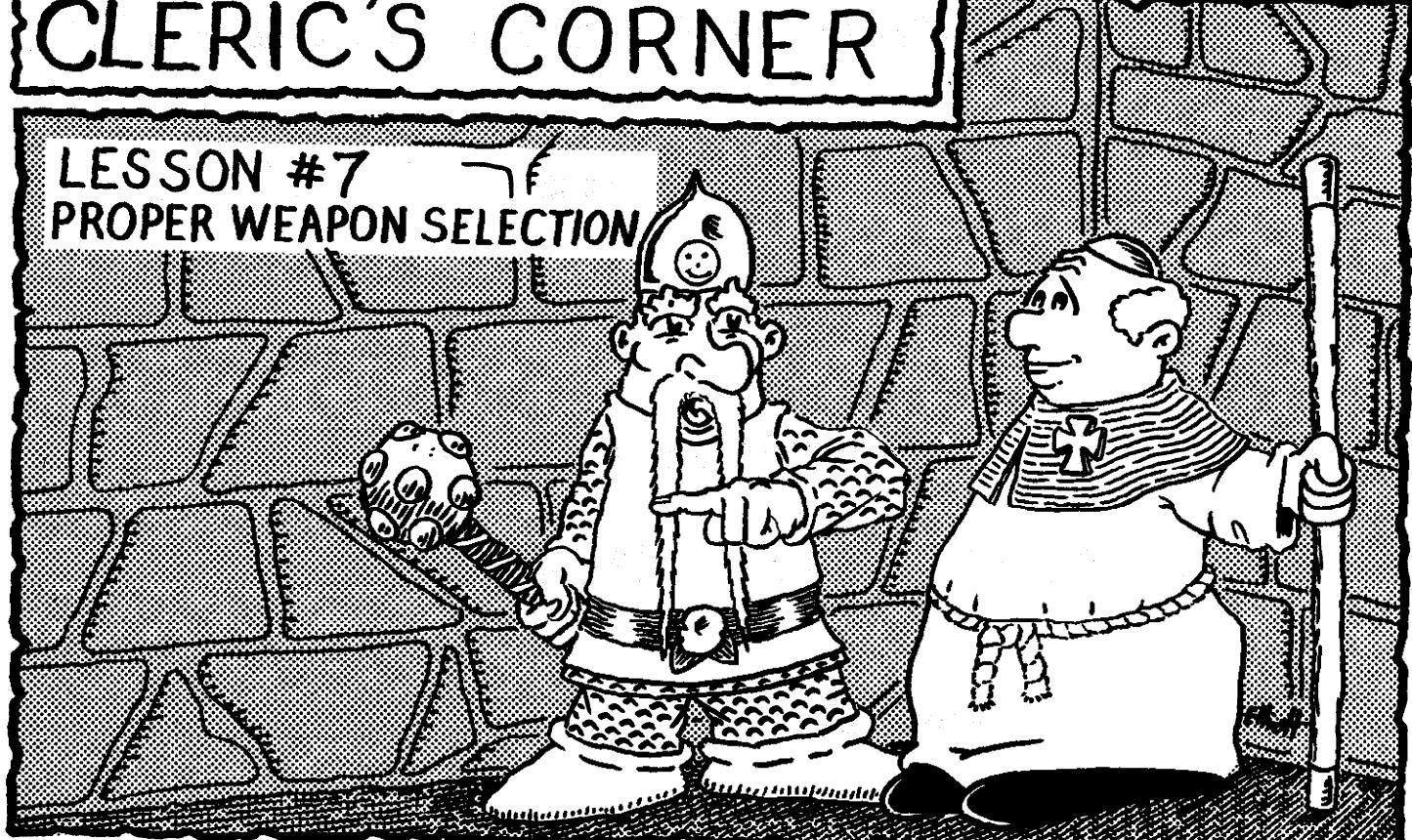
# Dragonmirth

WELL, THAT'S IT  
THEN... I'VE  
LOST THE  
INITIATIVE



## CLERIC'S CORNER

LESSON #7  
PROPER WEAPON SELECTION



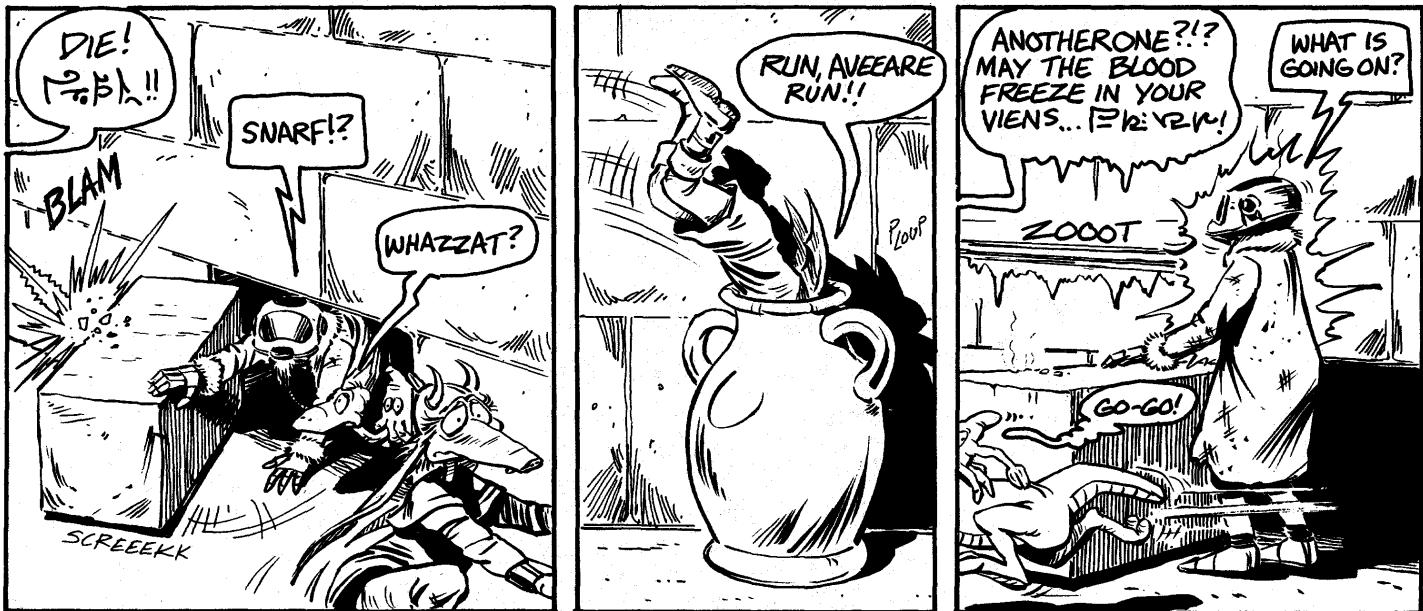
"I USED TO CARRY A LUCERN HAMMER — IMAGINE MY EMBARRASSMENT WHEN I FOUND OUT IT WAS A POLE ARM!"

# SNARF QUEST

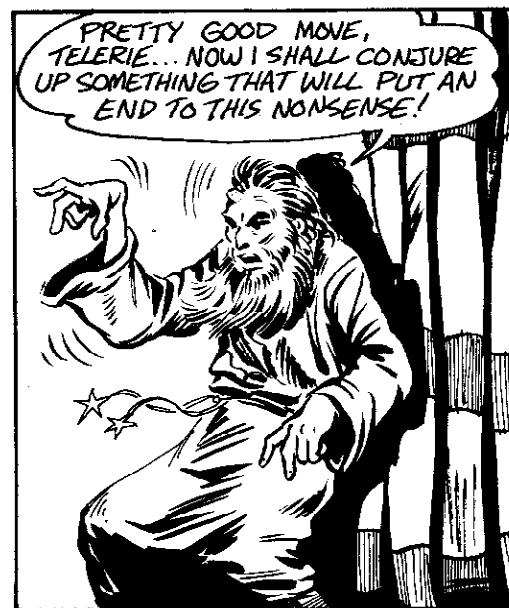
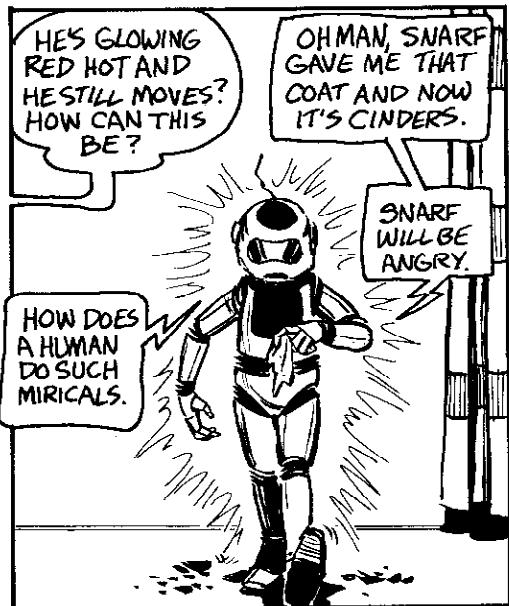
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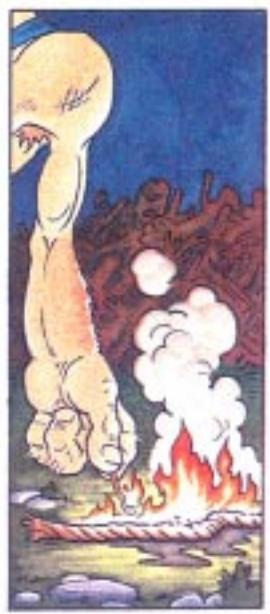
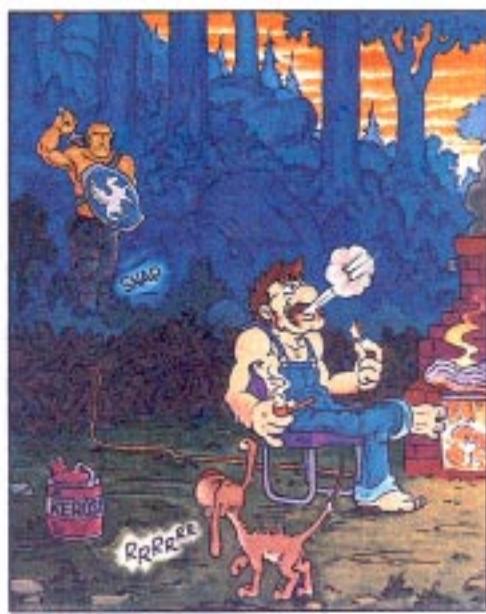
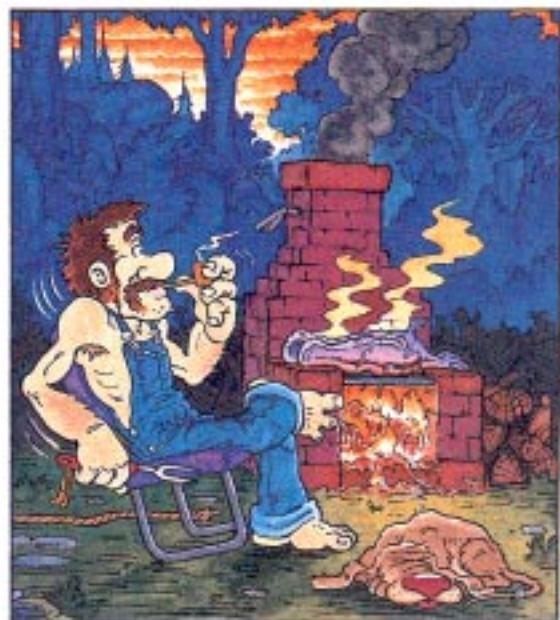
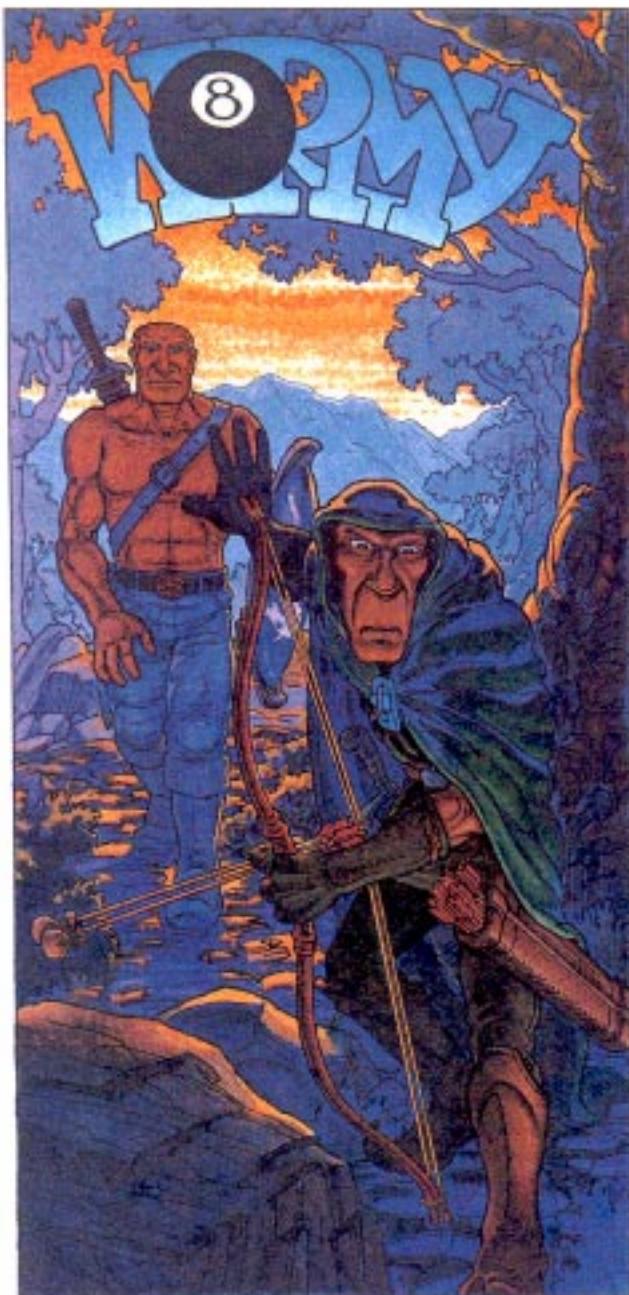
BY ELMORE

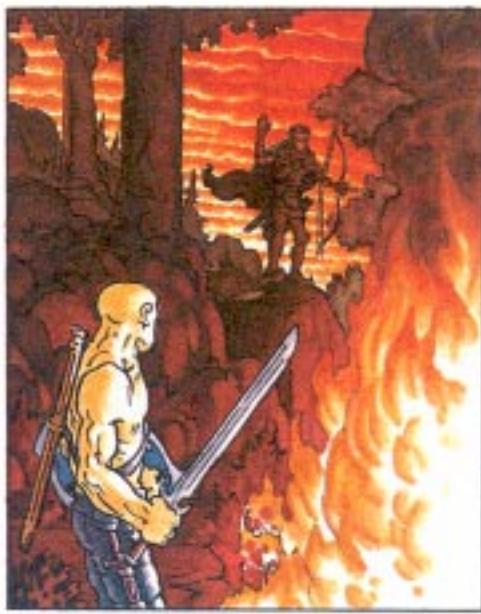
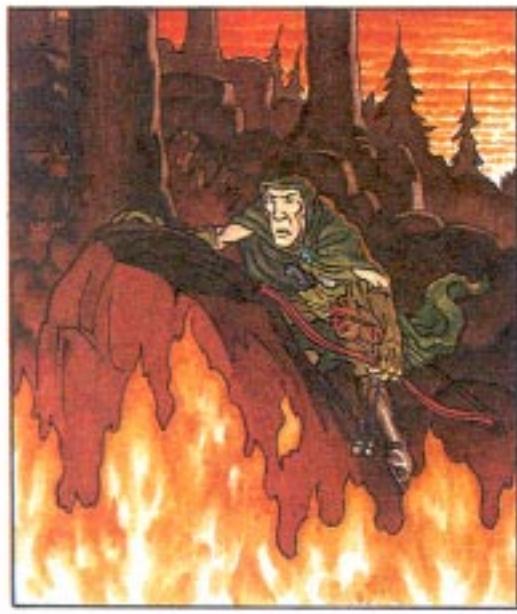
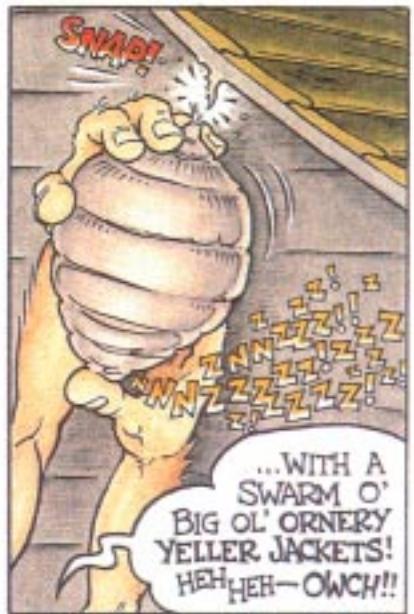
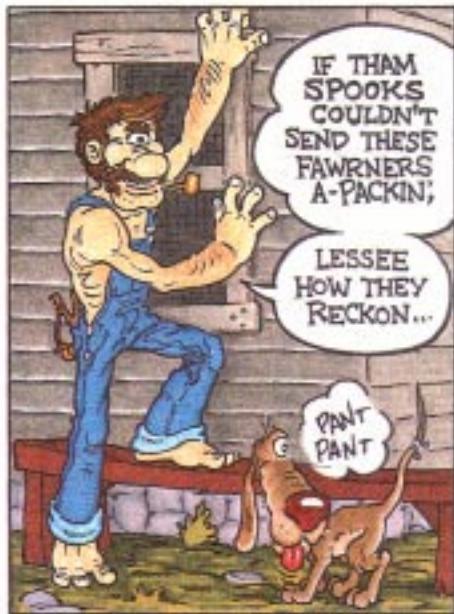
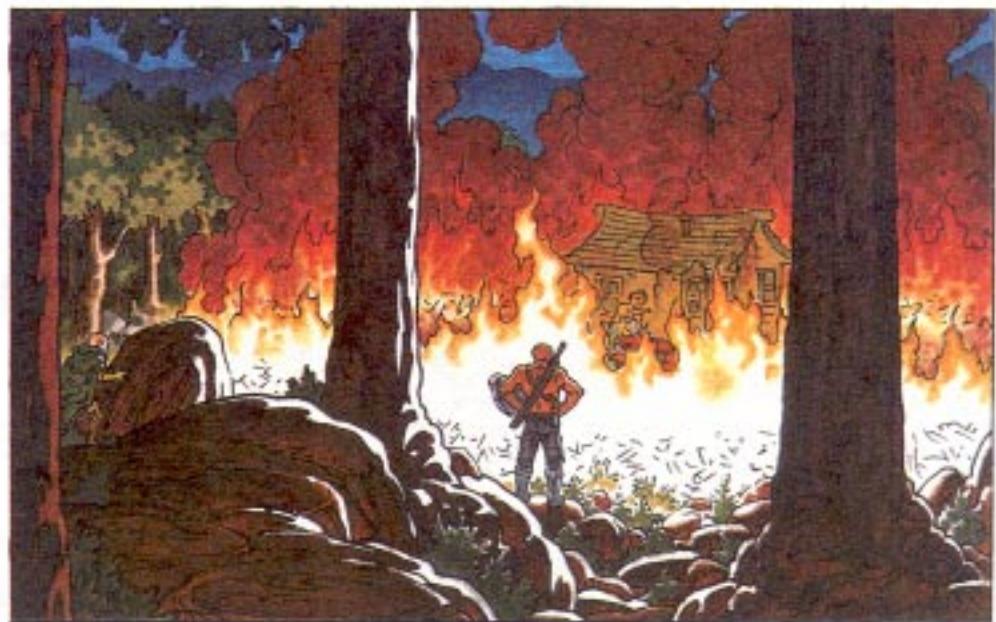
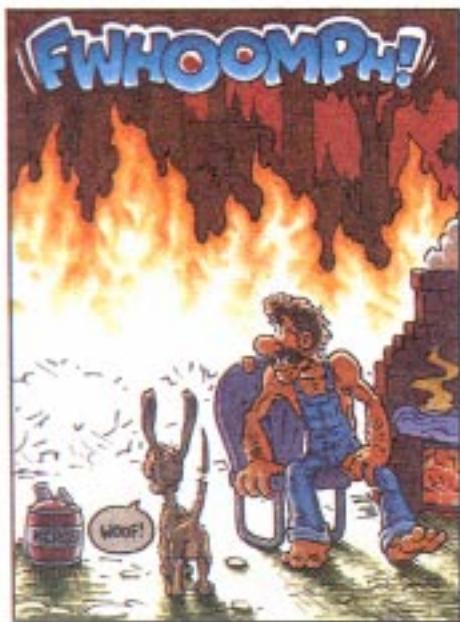
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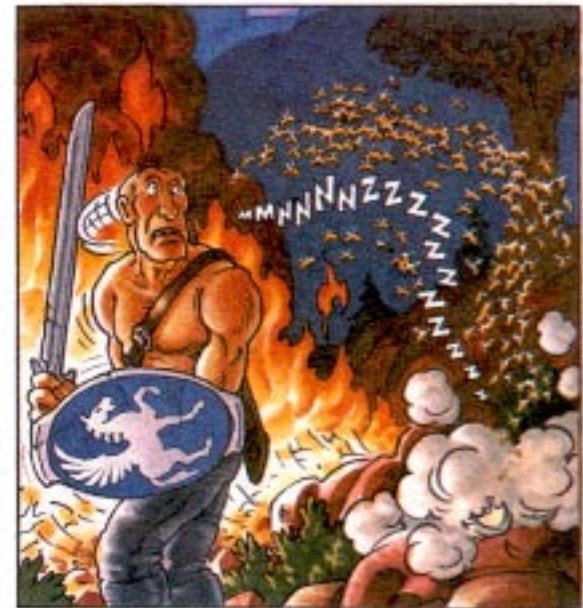














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